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ABSTRACT

This series of one- to two-page abstracts highlights a variety of innovative approaches to teaching and learning in the community college. Topics covered in the abstracts include: (1) cooperative planning for institutional excellence; (2) rewarding scholarship among community college faculty; (3) in-class debates as a learning strategy; (4) instructional approaches for remedial mathematics and English composition; (5) providing incentives for faculty publishing; (6) creating supportive environments for change and for effective adult learning; (7) strategies for helping students with declining grade point averages; (8) using a lottery approach to get students to "volunteer" to answer review questions; (9) study groups and study partners; (10) motivating adult basic education students; (11) helping students prepare for biology exams; (12) goal-setting and goal-using as learning strategies; (13) survival strategies for nursing students; (14) faculty hiring practices; (15) using desktop computers and combined auditory, kinesthetic, and visual learning methods in auto shop; and using computers to recruit students for the program; (16) enhancing critical thinking; (17) an experiment with freshman education majors in a college mathematics course; (18) formal program review of student services programs; (19) faculty taking classes from colleagues in other departments; (20) techniques to help instructors remember names and faces; (21) enhancing teacher enthusiasm; (22) selecting a chief instructional officer; (23) freshman orientation; (24) humor in instruction; (25) critical thinking and collaborative learning; (26) a review of the movie "Dead Poets Society"; (27) "Podium," a journal designed to promote educational research in the community college; (28) improving classroom communication; (29) staff development through a wilderness program; (30) employee orientation; (31) a common-sense approach to good teaching; and (32) the future of writing-across-the-curriculum programs. (JMC)

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VOLUME XI, NUMBER 1

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Energizing an Institution for Excellence

In the spring of 1984, the president of Riverside Community College formed the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, PSPAC (pronounced pizz-pack). Fifty-eight faculty, managers and support staff gathered together to try to answer such questions as: "Who are we? What's our purpose? Why do we exist? What do we do well? What is our business?"

The group met each Friday afternoon (yes, Friday afternoon) to discuss case studies of successful and unsuccessful businesses. We read John Naisbitt's Megatrends, George Keller's Academic Strategy and a history of our college, written by two Riverside professors.

President Chuck Kane was the "teacher of record" at the Friday meetings. His presentations included different audiovisual media: videotape, overhead transparencies, blackboard, sound/slide, flip charts. Other presenters were expected to follow suit, and most sessions were exemplars of good teaching.

The president usually opened the Friday meetings with, "Name one good thing." This created a positive, healthy, upbeat atmosphere. There were some surprising reports, things most people wouldn't have known. The "good thing" accounts often brought spontaneous applause and encouragement. There was also lots of humor, with the president often laughing at himself. Through the process, new and hidden talent appeared, frequently from surprising sources.

Smaller groups of nine or ten, which we called CAN Groups (named for a can-do attitude), met for an hour between the large-group meetings on Fridays to mull over the discussion questions on the week's case study or current topic. Each CAN Group had a CAN Leader, and the CAN Leaders met with the president on Thursday afternoons as his CAN Group. The CAN Leaders informed the president about how things were going in each of the groups. What was said, rather than who said it, was stressed. Individuals' names were not to be used. Of course, not everything went smoothly; some CAN Leaders were having a tough time with a few individuals in their groups, so other Leaders pitched in with suggestions to alleviate tensions and avoid potential problems.

It was our original intention to change the personnel and leadership of the CAN Groups about every four weeks. When we brought it up with the leaders, they all said, "No way!" Their groups were just beginning to jell, and they didn't want to repeat the courtship period. Gradually, an extremely strong spirit of trust and camaraderie had quietly developed among the members of each CAN Group, including the president's.

While the CAN Groups were expected to discuss ideas and look at concepts from every possible angle (we called it "looking at the fish" from an article which described 19th century Harvard professor Louis Agassiz's habit of making his students study a dead fish by the hour, day and week), they were not expected to produce any product. To produce a product, we developed "Action Groups." Action Groups were made up of representatives from each of the six CAN Groups. They operated on Friday afternoons and had to work within very limited and rigid time limits. While philosophical discussions were held in the CAN Groups, Action Groups were to quickly create something of substance and to explain and defend it. For example, they could be assigned to rank the top five things the college does best (from a list of 100 developed by the large group), or list three of the most important things we must do to become a quality college (again from a long list).

Some participants didn't want themselves and the college to be compared with businesses. They said a "business mentality" was hostile to academe. "We're not a business!" they exclaimed. But the complaints became less frequent when we got into our own business. Almost subconsciously, some newly-learned business and marketing principles were applied to RCC. We brought in former faculty members who had taught in the '20s, '30s and '40s, and they shared stories of what this college was like in its early years. We invited some community leaders who had done informal surveys of what the "man on the street" thought of our college. We had graduating high school seniors tell the group why they would not be attending RCC and what made another college or university more attractive. Some of their reasons were not flattering, but we

needed to hear them. Another group of our own students told us why they had selected RCC.

The college had gone through its ten-year regional accreditation process the preceding year. Most of us were weary of writing mission statements and goals and objectives. So when the president badgered us, week after week, with "What business are we in?", the group decided that a one sentence statement about our business would be far more effective than a paragraph on our mission.

Once we decided what business we were in, we started talking about values. One of the intriguing discussion questions about the three businesses we studied was, "What does this company value?" One value was profit, one was quality, and the other was service. What were Riverside Community College's values? Not surprisingly, the committee discovered that everyone wanted to do a good job. Groundsmen wanted the lawns to be green, mowed and trimmed with neat shrubbery and fresh, colorful flowers grown in season. Faculty members wanted to be excellent teachers, lucid and able to get their subjects across in an interesting, stimulating manner. Secretaries wanted to turn out work efficiently and respond to telephone calls before the third ring. Eventually, everyone realized that students were the fulcrum around which the institution revolved. We originally came up with seven values and grudgingly whittled them down to four. Student centeredness became our first value.

Finally, we asked ourselves about our vision. What did we want to be in 1995? Did we want to become the best community college in Riverside County? Certainly, and we may already be the best!

How about the best in Southern California? Absolutely! What about the entire state—there are some pretty good colleges among the 106? Yes! And if we became the best in California, why not the entire country, or for that matter, the world? Well, gosh, gee whiz, why not go for it?!

Eventually, the Action Groups had to make a statement about our business, vision and values. While developing one of our values, student centeredness, the Action Groups were asked to complete this sentence: "To achieve student centeredness, we will . . . ."

As the weeks went by, people began to know each other, and talk! They called each other by first names. Gradually, they began to realize that they indeed might have some say about the destiny of their institution.

Gradually, there was a *changed attitude*—toward their job, each other, the president, the teaching profession. They developed an understanding of the interdependence of each job on campus.

There was a kind of euphoria that gripped that first group. We were giant killers. There was nothing that we couldn't do if we put our minds to it and worked together! We had a vision; we knew what our business was. And our four values—student centeredness, teaching excellence, learning environment, tradition—would keep us on track!

*

Examples of PSPAC's outcomes, listed under the four values, follow:

Student Centeredness—Our class schedules and other publications no longer have pictures of buildings on their covers. The pictures (in color) are of students and faculty working together, illustrating each of our four values.

Teaching Excellence—(1) Faculty members were encouraged to use media in their class presentations. A media specialist was hired to work with individual faculty members.

(2) As a result of mixing disciplines within CAN Groups, members grew to recognize the expertise of faculty in other areas. Some began to invite members from other departments to lecture to their classes on pertinent topics.

Learning Environment—PSPAC identified the need to upgrade the condition of all classrooms. During the summer of 1984, an ad hoc faculty committee drew up a list of 24 items an ideal classroom should have.

Tradition—As a result of valuing tradition, we reinstated Convocation—a college-wide activity which takes place during the opening of the Fall Semester. Faculty members, in full academic regalia, lead their students to the quadrangle lawn with pomp and circumstance, where a distinguished speaker gives a scholarly address on a topic of academic interest.

Note: PSPAC II participants were nominated by members from the first. PSPAC III's members were primarily self-selected, and students were included for the first time. Beginning with and since PSPAC III, new faculty have been included. And PSPAC IV met on a different schedule—membership largely was faculty whose school schedules prohibited their attending the Friday afternoon sessions. PSPAC VII is ready to go. Over 300 individuals have been involved in PSPAC, thus far.

Evan Vail, *Dean, Research and Planning*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Rewarding Community College Scholarship

Picture this. It is a balmy evening and the city's best hotel gleams with lights. In a second floor room, the college president walks across the deep carpet. He is followed by the chairman of the college board, and the executive director of the state system is already greeting guests. Crystal wine goblets shine from a corner table, and the attendant arranges the last pieces of pineapple on a center table. A reception for foundation donors or state legislators? Far from it.

Approximately 50 guests arrive. They engage naturally in the acceptable "reception" format. The chatter is somewhat normal for such a gathering; but also it is excited with such comments as "We've never done this before," "This is wonderful," and "It's about time." A yellow program, printed by the computer graphics students, announces a "reading." At the appointed time, a poetic rendition is delivered by a faculty member from the English department. Who is the audience? It is the faculty and staff of a technical college who each, in the past year, published an article in a significant journal or presented a paper to professional peers at a regional or national meeting.

The poem, the refreshments provided by the college foundation, and the thank-you's of the president and others not only served to say that the "extra" work done in the name of scholarship is appreciated, but also provided these faculty with magnificent motivation to be back at next year's Author's Reception. The whole affair was an innovative way to both empower and reward those who produce. It also cost less than $250. It was innovative because it was a first. It was also unusual for a technical college! It empowered those faculty and staff who were "authors" because it presented their work as important to the most influential people in the college.

Even collecting the information about scholarship was a new activity at our two-year college. When the annual activity sheets of faculty and staff were tallied, we were thrilled. In 1986-87, faculty from our college presented over 40 papers in 19 states and two foreign countries. These faculty also published 12 articles in nationally-refereed journals. They did not receive a pay raise for their scholarship. They weren't even asked to do it, and they persisted in spite of 18-20 classroom contact hours each week. Our college, like most community colleges, had no way of "rewarding," let alone encouraging, faculty scholarship. The Author's Reception gave us the power to do both.

The reception also produced other outcomes. When news media were informed of the accomplishments of the college's faculty, two important stories were featured by local newspapers. This year we noticed a significant increase in scholarship.

Over the last two years, a number of innovative programs to empower and reward faculty have been implemented at our college. The Author's Reception is one which adds a classy thank-you to the college's climate for productivity. Another program, PRICE (Program Reward for Innovative and Creative Excellence), features competition between departments for a few thousand dollars to complete an innovative project. The Incentive Travel Program matches a faculty member's departmental or personal travel contribution if a paper is being presented and all other funds are exhausted.

*

1. If you want your rewards to be noticed, do something that is a first, or something unexpected.
2. If you want rewards to be motivational, do something that shows genuine, personal appreciation.
3. If you want the rewards to be challenging, repeat and make them a part of your college culture; this will build expectations.
4. Routinely collect information about faculty and staff scholarship.
5. Don't let the lack of *big* money deter you. The PRICE awards assisted six departments for $9,000, and the incentive travel is only $5,000.
6. Express clearly why scholarship, the receipt of grants, community services, and teaching are all important and worthy of reward.

Reid A. Holland, *Vice President, Educational Affairs*

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On the Notion That "It's Easy"

As I recall the behaviour of my own teachers and peers and when I reflect on my own, I am struck by the number of times we encourage students with the statement that the learning in question is "EASY." Our intentions are good; after all, we are addressing the student's anxiety about the learning episode.

What we are also doing, unfortunately, is setting them up for a disappointment. If a student has difficulty comprehending a concept, or manipulating a particular tool after hearing that the task is "EASY," he or she can only feel more stupid or incapable of further learning. On the other hand, the student who masters the idea or task feels no sense of accomplishment. After all, it was "EASY." Our good intention of motivating students has either robbed them of the sense of victory in learning or made them feel dumb in finding it difficult.

It is important to encourage students, particularly adults who may have had problems in school and hold serious doubts about their ability to learn. So how do we address these feelings?

An answer is to agree with their perceptions about the difficulty of the material and to disagree with their perceptions of their ability. This two-pronged approach to the issue identifies with their feelings and concerns, while at the same time offering the best possible option for their learning.

We tell them: "This stuff is hard (tricky, etc.), but you can handle it with my help and the help of your classmates." If they quickly grasp the material, they think: "Wow, I am student material." If they take a long time, they think: "Well, it was difficult anyway." The combination of their persistence and the support of others not only helps them with the learning at hand but provides a model for learning episodes ahead. This alternative provides realistic expectations that prepare the student for success and a sense of accomplishment.

A colleague once said: "Teachers should be careful of what they say because students believe them." Our attempts to encourage students should not set them up for disappointment.

Pat Pattison, *Instructor, Electrical Department*

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Do Unions (Bleep)?

Teaching INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS is tough, given the combination of topical diversity and wide range of student experiences. Yet it was in this course that I made a startling discovery.

The topic was unions. As usual, I had prepared transparencies, assembled relevant articles from the newspaper, and checked the Instructor's Manual for teaching tips. I have belonged to a union for years and know it well. But, admittedly, my treatment of this topic always had been lackluster.

I enthusiastically previewed the topic for the class: "Next time, let's talk about unions. What are unions? What do they fight for?" Students responded coolly.

"How do you f-e-e-l about unions?" I gasped.

"Unions (bleep)!" a student shouted.

"Unions (bleep)?" I asked. "Want to debate it? Next time, Jerome will argue against unions. Who will argue for them?" Immediately, Vicki volunteered, starting a verbal battle among the two students and their respective supporters about the debate's outcome.

At the beginning of the next class, I printed "Do unions (bleep)?" on the board, with students' names arguing for and against unions. During the next 75 minutes, I participated in the most detailed, comprehensive and emotional discussion of any topic in the business text and, perhaps, in my eight years of teaching this course. My role was to facilitate the discussion: analyzing, clarifying and summarizing students' positions while relating their language to relevant concepts in the text.

Some students seemed surprised that answers to their questions were actually in the book. Others appeared amazed that their classmates knew so much and had such strong feelings about something they were assigned to read for homework. Students who had not spoken in class before joined the discussion, supporting or denying a debater's position based on personal experience, hearsay, or—occasionally—even something they had read in their business text.

At the end of the class, the debate continued; the question—"Do unions (bleep)?"—remained unanswered. And this teacher had learned something about unions and about teaching.

James Paradiso, *Instructor, Management*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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What I Learned in Math 001

Foundations of Mathematics, Math 001, is not a highly regarded course by faculty or staff at Triton College. The low level of course content engenders negative feelings toward students who place into the course, and the course lacks prestige for college faculty. This combination results in staffing problems and is considered a likely explanation for a low percentage of course completers.

For many reasons, students do poorly on the mathematics placement test. Some students clearly lack or have never learned basic math skills. Others may have had some mastery at one time but have adopted bad math habits; the result is common errors in problem solving. A third group has simply forgotten math skills; in actuality, they need a refresher course.

The course content is divided into four topics: whole numbers, fractions, decimals and percents. Even the least mathematically inclined person perceives these topics as belonging to an elementary curriculum. This is affirmed in the textbook title which contains the word "arithmetic."

I have always enjoyed, at times loved, teaching math. I have always thought of myself as an effective teacher. I have always been pleased with the student evaluations and other feedback. However, Math 001 had some very troubling aspects. I perceived students as unmotivated, tardy, truant and totally disinterested. The department course completion rate for Math 001 was approximately 50%. Many 001 students' lack of interest in my instruction caused me to feel that much of the fault lay with them. If they would only "get their acts together," they would complete the course.

As Chair of the Math Department at Triton, I schedule all of the math faculty assignments. Math 001 is an unpopular assignment. I had not taught the course for over a year; so to avoid any repercussions from other math faculty, I scheduled myself to teach two sections of Math 001 in summer 1987 and one section in fall 1987.

I thought of ways to improve instruction and completion rate. In the summer sections I tried a new organizational presentation and testing approach. Success was somewhat better, but both samples were small; and I did not feel satisfied that I had made a significant improvement.

I took on the fall semester with missionary zeal. I was determined to make Math 001 a success. My spirit was dashed the first day of class. I walked into the usual sea of faces—no smiles, just looks; not hostile; not friendly. During the third week of class, I put a new plan into action. I asked students to meet with me in my office for a brief five- to ten-minute interview. I believed this personal approach would help me chart their progress and ensure they were doing their work. I took my appointment book to class and personally contacted students to set an appointment at their convenience. This necessitated my being in the office many more hours than usual. One student could only "squeeze me in" on Saturday. I agreed to the meeting.

Again my spirit was saddened. Within the next few days, only three of the first 12 appointments were kept. My first reaction was, "What a bust of an idea." I felt this was just another example of their lack of responsibility. However, I decided to persist. At the next class meeting, I rescheduled the students who had missed their appointments and chided them for their forgetfulness. I verbally reminded all who had appointments in the upcoming days.

The students began showing up at my office on time. The *conversations*, a more appropriate word than *interviews*, were lasting longer and longer. A few students stayed 30 to 40 minutes. We talked about their progress in class and their plans for the future. Some students were very definite about their plans. Others were undecided, but very open to suggestions. Several students needed academic counseling, and we reviewed catalog requirements. I asked each student about his or her interests. I began to look forward to and enjoy our conversations and the insights I gained from each person. I was continually amazed at the many accomplishments of each student.

I became acquainted with a young woman who was a social worker at a home for retarded adults. We talked at length about her job. Some of her stories were heartrending, and I gained a new respect for the generosity and patience required in her job. Her plan was to become a chiropractic physician.

I met a 65-year-old gentleman who told me about his 40 years of service as a registered nurse. He was

delightful and charming, and he often spoke of his grandchildren. He had returned to school to learn the restaurant business.

One young student revealed that he had won a number of state awards in music. He could play several instruments and was a member of a small band. He was proud of his accomplishments and planned to be a music major.

Another student was a cocktail waitress at a first-class hotel. She was looking forward to a career in child development. Through the interviews I met two security guards, a disc jockey who was planning to study architecture, and an air conditioning and refrigeration technician. All of these students were in Math 001 to enhance their skills and pursue career goals.

I helped one young lady who was having extreme difficulty in the class discover, after years of struggle, that she had a learning disability. She told me that she always thought she was "just dumb," and she was relieved to find out it was something else. She set a goal to become an automobile repair specialist and has since taken a job in the automotive department of a major store.

I sent a note to a student who had stopped coming to class and asked her if she needed extra help. My note so impressed her that she resumed her course work after family problems were resolved.

*

After all of the interviews were completed, I took classtime to introduce each student to the class and mention a little bit about the job he or she held. This question was then asked of each: "How do you use math on your job?" Some interesting answers emerged; and when a student was stumped for an answer, the rest of the class made suggestions. Math came alive through this exercise, and each student showed a genuine interest in the work of others.

*

I enjoyed interviewing the students in Math 001. Each was pleasant, interesting and enjoyable. I am not sure how much the interviews helped to improve math skills, but I do know that they were very important to me as I prepared for each class. Twenty-two of the 24 students were employed, and I was impressed with the responsibility each assumed. I no longer thought of them as unmotivated, tardy, truant, irresponsible and totally disinterested people. I had underestimated their capabilities. My view of them changed from students needing remediation, to successful and responsible adults. Each had strengths and qualities that could not be demonstrated in a simple math classroom. Although these students were not strong in mathematics, they were proficient and even excellent in areas that were difficult, challenging and required accountability.

*

Reflecting upon many years of teaching, I feel guilty over my possible lack of empathy toward some of my poorest students. Perhaps I would have been a more effective teacher if I had taken the time to know my students and show them that I cared. I realized that I was more approachable to students and that they shared more openly with one another. Because I took an interest in each student, all students took an interest in each other's accomplishments, progress and jobs. I was not viewed as one apart and in charge. Class was a pleasant, fun experience; and I was the facilitator.

Seventeen of the original 24 students finished the class with a "C" or better. This enabled them to progress to the next math course. While this retention rate is not spectacular, it is certainly better than the department average of 50%.

For me, this experience is worth repeating. I expect to conduct interviews in all of my classes next semester. While it is time-consuming and sometimes inconvenient, the rewards are great. Perhaps this technique will not be effective in every class, but I will continue to pursue adaptive methods of teaching which make knowledge come alive and learning fun.

Ellen Milosheff, *Chair, Mathematics*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Community College Staff Development: Institutional Incentive for Professional Publication

Although some community colleges require professional publication for advancement, most community colleges (including my own Kalamazoo Valley Community College) do not. Community colleges were created primarily as teaching institutions, seemingly to the exclusion of research. And while I do not necessarily subscribe to the "publish or perish" policy so often attached to four-year institutions, I do feel it is imperative for community college instructors to be professionally active, including professional publication. Therefore, as part of my Professional Development Plan (PDP) at KVCC, I developed and proposed a means for receiving credit for my professional publications.

The Professional Development Plan

The PDP allows faculty members to earn graduate semester-hour credit through a variety of activities: graduate and undergraduate coursework, routine and new work experience, industrial school courses, correspondence courses, technical seminars, and approved research. The work performed in these activities is equated to graduate semester-hour credit; and after earning 15 semester hours, a faculty member advances a column on the pay scale. At KVCC there are six columns: I: Less Than Master's; II: Master's Degree or Equiv.; III: MA=15sh or Equiv.; IV: MA+30sh or Equiv.; V: MA+45sh or Equiv.; VI: MA+60sh or Equiv.

A New Proposal

The "Approved Research" component of the PDP states: "A research report judged by a panel of peers to be of caliber and extent of a typical master's thesis will be equivalent to three (3) graduate semester credit hours." It was under this rubric that I proposed receiving credit for my professional publications:

> As part of the "Approved Research" section, I would like to receive credit equated to graduate semester-hour credit for the published writing—book reviews, articles and books—I do while teaching English at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

The reasoning for my proposal was quite simple—writing teachers should write, must write (and not just in the writing classroom with their students). That writing teachers should be writers themselves is a theme in many compositional texts for teachers.

As I stated in my proposal, writing teachers who write can empathize with their students and the difficulties they face in writing; writing teachers who write know firsthand the writing process and how it works; writing teachers who write and publish can feel a sense of professional fulfillment by contributing new ideas, perspectives and information to the profession, and thus are producers rather than merely consumers in their field; writing teachers who write and publish are actively involved in the profession, which reflects well on their institution and community colleges in general.

I queried 20 of my colleagues from various disciplines at KVCC about my proposal; 18 supported it. Most agreed that community college instructors should be more visible in their respective fields and should share—in writing their ideas, interests, findings and practices—with others in their field. Also most believed that equating published writing to graduate credit would provide incentive for instructors to write. Several colleagues expressed an interest in writing a similar proposal for their own PDP.

Deciding how to equate graduate semester-hour credit to published book reviews, articles and books proved to be no easy task. I discussed my proposal with several colleagues and worked closely with my associate dean and dean of instruction—both of whom reflect the administration's desire to encourage professional development—to develop an equitable equivalency. Ultimately, we decided upon the following:

- Book review = 0.25 to 0.50 graduate semester-hour credit, depending upon length
- Article = 1.0 to 3.0 graduate semester-hour credit, depending upon length
- Book = 3.0 to 9.0 graduate semester-hour credit, depending upon length. No vanity press publications.

Additionally, the proposal stated that all published work would be judged by a panel of peers and would appear in recognizable journals. I included a list (by no means exhaustive) of possible professional journals in which I might publish—for example, College Composition and Communication, Teaching English in the Two-Year College, and Western American Literature. Naturally, this list of journals would vary according to an instructor's discipline and areas of interest.

Publication Incentives

Naturally, this proposal could be tailored for community college teachers in any discipline; it should not be limited to writing teachers. Teachers in all disciplines (from accounting to zoology) should be professionally active and should be encouraged to publish their work, whether that work is an automotive technology instructor's investigation of the Flat Rate system in the automobile service industry, an economic instructor's newspaper column on current issues in economics, or an accounting instructor's discussion of classroom strategies.

My professional publications will not only bring me personal satisfaction, but institutional recognition and (eventually) financial reward. Since the approval of my PDP, I have received 0.25 graduate semester-hour credit for a published book review and have had an article accepted for publication, for which I will receive credit upon publication.

Finding the time to be professionally active, to write, while still managing a typical community college teaching load of 15 to 16 hours per week, is a dilemma that community college instructors continually face and must strive (on a college, state and national level) to solve. In the meantime, I am encouraged to follow Donald Murray's advice: "Nulla dies sine linea" (never a day without a line)—if only a few lines, written in the gaps between teaching and family responsibilities.

Keith Kroll, *Instructor, English*

For further information, contact the author at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, 6767 West O Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009.

Plan to join participants from colleges across the U.S. and Canada for the eleventh annual celebration of teaching excellence, to be held in Austin, May 21-24, 1989.
Featured speakers: Jacquelyn Belcher, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Lane Community College, Oregon, and President, American Association of Women in Community/Junior Colleges; Walter Bumphus, Vice President for Student Services, Howard Community College, Maryland, and President, National Council on Student Development; Harold "Bud" Hodgkinson, Senior Fellow, Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C.; Charles Kane, President, Riverside Community College, California; Hans Mark, Chancellor, The University of Texas System, Texas; Byron McClenney, President, Community College of Denver, Colorado; Kay McClenney, Educational Consultant, Colorado; Charles Pascal, Chair, Ontario Council of Regents, Ontario, Canada; and Terry O'Banion, Executive Director, League for Innovation in the Community College, California. A final program for NISOD's International Conference on Teaching Excellence and Conference of Administrators will be available by March 15.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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On Teaching English Composition to Older Students

After only three class sessions into the semester, a student came into my office and issued the following warning: "The two people I hate most in this world are dentists and English teachers!" No, I'm not her dentist.

This student, perhaps 40 or 45 years old, spoke for many students who, after several years away from an academic environment, return to school to face—among other things—all those remotely familiar rules and exceptions and diagrams and formidable terms which make up their memories of past English classes. Unfortunately, they hated English then, and they hate English now. Like our counterparts, though, the dentists who casually approach their patients with Novocain syringes hidden behind their backs, there are some measures we can take to make it all less painful.

Identify the Students

This first task is the easiest. The older student who fears English will usually let the instructor know of that fear, sometimes in the forthright manner of the above-mentioned student, and sometimes in the form of "It's been years since I've had any English!" This common "confession" is most often followed with a plea for patience. In contrast to this direct approach, some older students will simply remain silent—both in class discussions and on the page itself. This particular form of "writer's block" may become apparent with the first in-class writing assignment, but most older students will face their fears and let the instructor know of them rather than sit there and face the blank page for very long. A spontaneous conference can ease the pressure and show the student that the instructor understands.

Identify the Students' Fears

The fears older students face when returning to school are usually not singular, and in English class those fears usually coalesce. The older students fear what they think is extremely sharp competition from younger students; they fear failure, especially if some past failures trigger additional guilt and regret for not remembering all those English rules and exceptions which they know they should have learned ages ago and which, they believe, their younger classmates have so recently and skillfully mastered. Combine enough fear with enough guilt and regret and one has the classic older student's resistance to writing in English Composition.

One particular fear, though, has surprising potential for immediate devastation: the fear of grammatical terms. To fire barrage after barrage of "correlative and cumulative" adjectives, or "reflexive and demonstrative" pronouns at the older student—whose memory may remember the words but not the meanings—is to trigger all the other attendant fears of English. For some, the words "coordinating conjunction" or "subordinate clause" are as menacing and spine-straightening as the sound of any dentist's drill. To some, who may know their way around in the practical uses of the language without too much difficulty, those terms spell immediate confusion and lack of confidence.

Overcome the Resistance

Much of the resistance can be overcome by "playing down" the terms. This is not to say that the terms should be neglected, nor that rules should take second seat to "free expression" (as happened during the 70's); it is to recommend an astute awareness of the anxieties grammatical language can create in older students. In short, the terms can be more overwhelming and intimidating than an instructor might imagine. Therefore, until the student feels more comfortable with writing, the term should be of secondary importance. Then as the student's writing mistakes become apparent, the necessary terms can be used to make the corrections.

Secondly, both the instructor and the student can move forward faster if the student is not allowed to emphasize past failures. For some reason, a few older students think that the instructor will be more patient if he is reminded frequently of the student's past failures. Such emphasis on past performance, though, can become a block to success in the present. An instructor might acknowledge those past shortcomings, but only in passing as a sign of understanding. An instructor might also point out that past failures have nothing to do with performance now, nor with the current possibility of success. One might ask "Are you doing poorly

now?" instead of "Why did you do poorly in the past?"

The instructor's main task is to get older students comfortable enough with using language that they can do so effectively. Often, it helps to tell the students straight out: "Don't worry about making too many mistakes now. The more you make now, the more we will catch and correct, and the fewer you will make later on." This attitude, along with a grading scale which places more emphasis on later work than on work done early in the semester, does much to relax the older students about their real or imagined shortcomings.

There are other ways to help older students relax while all their fear-filled memories of past English classes reform in vague shadows on the blank page in front of them. One of these is to point out that, contrary to how or what they may be feeling, most older students outperform younger students simply because they have been exposed to more writing opportunities. They most likely have written more letters, more business reports, or more PTA or school board reports. Moreover, older students usually have read more than younger students and, thus, may have developed a "street wise" sense in and around the more common uses of the language. This working knowledge of the language gives many older students a more confident start in academic writing.

One last comment on the value of positive comments. Imagine sitting in a dentist chair while the dentist examines your X-rays. Would you rather have him click his tongue and shake his head; or would you rather hear, "Not too bad—a little work here, a little there maybe, but otherwise no problem"?

Getting an older student to write well is often made difficult because of past fears and anxieties which loom as composing obstacles. If a student can realize that English is not really as painful as she or he recalls, then corrective measures will come more easily.

William Horrell, *Instructor, English*

For further information, contact the author at North Arkansas Community College, Pioneer Ridge, Harrison, AR 72601.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Creating Supportive Environments for Change

Space, solitude, ritual and community are four potential sources of support for individuals and groups during periods of change. I believe it is important to find comfortable physical space, to spend time alone, to recognize and repeat meaningful experiences, and to build relationships with a core group. There are patterns that emerge when such support is offered—a complementarity between space and solitude and between ritual and community, as well as synergism among them all. For example, to be alone and to be able to find one's own space are vital, although sometimes unacknowledged, components of community.

It is my sense, in fact, that these four elements can provide a valuable support framework which encourages positive, meaningful change. It is a framework which makes it possible to think about both the individual and the group, both physical and emotional needs, both practical and symbolic acts.

As an internal consultant to the Dallas County Community College District, one of my goals is to help make space, solitude, ritual and community more of a reality in our organization. In my own mind, at least, I spend a portion of my time promoting these four qualities. Another way to describe my task is to see it in terms of buying time for the organization, because time is the elixir that brings these properties to life. If we find space, it is because there has been time to find and enjoy a place of our own. If we find solitude, it is because there has been time to be alone. If we find ritual, it is because there has been time to share and celebrate. If we find community, it is because there has been time to get to know one another.

As you know, the gift of time is not easily "given" in a community college. My organization, the DCCCD, has some 50,000 credit students each semester and almost that number of noncredit students. We offer more than 120 vocational programs, as well as the usual array of transfer coursework and a broad spectrum of continuing education offerings. We are a commuter institution. We have 2000 full-time employees and are housed in 11 district locations spread across Dallas County. Furthermore, we seek to be innovators, and our own expectations of our work are high. We insist of ourselves that we be quick on our feet, always pressing.

It was my sense—both of the urgency surrounding our work and the need for space, solitude, ritual and community—that brought me to these questions: How can leaders in my organization find time for personal/professional growth? How can these "different drummer" rhythms be made more appealing? How can I help? The answers did not come easily, and then they seemed perhaps too obvious—make it easier and more invigorating to set aside the current hornet's nest of work; structure my time with leaders in ways different than the usual organizational encounters; practice the art of idea-giving with no strings attached; take advantage of "down" times, if there are any!

The Reading Room

Providing services through the Reading Room is my clearest attempt to create opportunities for space, solitude, ritual and community. Through this mechanism, I seek to offer time and reinforcement for personal/professional growth. The image is drawn from my favorite place in the library. As I studied in the library during formative years, the Reading Room offered indirect lighting, polished floors, tall ceilings, leather chairs you could get lost in. People spoke in hushed voices. It was a place where you could daydream, lose track of time, think brave new thoughts without anyone getting suspicious.

It was in the spirit of the Reading Room that my secretary, a student helper and I volunteered to provide leaders several services: a book-lending service, a cassette-lending service, our own version of a clipping service, as well as a standing offer—to listen to an interest or concern and look for resources that had application. Leaders were invited to take advantage of these services, and participation was completely voluntary. As often as possible, I reinforced the notion that the goal was to save time for our busy professionals. My offer was to sort through large quantities of information and provide easy access to only the best. Our office began and continues to circulate bulletins announcing new resources available through the Reading Room. Each issue provides several pages of resource "teasers"—summaries that are themselves

designed to be food for thought. Requested resources are then circulated through campus mail.

Since the services of the Reading Room have been in place for several years now, it is possible to take a look at the progress we have made, some of which has been unexpected. For instance, we do seem to have provided space and solitude. Most of the activities encouraged through the Reading Room are solitary, at least to begin with. People read alone and listen alone in their own space at work or home. Another unanticipated way we have promoted these qualities has hinged on our professionals' use of the automobile. Since we are a commuter institution and leaders are often on the road, a good number have begun to listen to Reading Room audiotapes in their cars—one of the few places where there may be an absence of demand and few intrusions. Specifications for institutional cars include a cassette deck as a standard feature, in part to encourage leaders to take advantage of this learning method.

Often after their perusal of Reading Room materials, these leaders will then talk to one another about what they have read or heard. Since they all have access to the same materials, common reference points seem to encourage the dialogue that is a necessary part of community. And as for rituals—well, we have begun some: back to school, holiday and summer Reading Room Bulletins, for example. We regularly showcase the "just published" writings of our own professionals. But more important, the materials provided through the Reading Room stress the importance of attending to our organization's culture. They suggest ways for our DCCCD professionals to develop their own rituals and promote community.

We continue to explore the ways in which the Reading Room can provide help—simply and voluntarily. Currently, some 200 of DCCCD employees receive our bulletins. Any staff member is added to our routing list upon request, and a number routinely route their copy to friends and associates. A typical issue describes perhaps 30 resources (books, tapes, articles) and, over a month or so, generates an average of 100 requests for resources. The majority of our resources fall in the following general categories: teaching and learning, creativity and innovation, and personal and professional growth.

Under these general headings, there is help with the nitty gritty—how to write, speak, save time, get organized, become more or less assertive. There is help with the difficult—how to supervise and evaluate more effectively, how to interview prospective employees, how to deal with personnel problems. But the most popular selections deal with the profound—how to engender trust which builds community, how to structure and encourage organizational alignment, how to provide an undergirding vision and the necessary supporting values for a healthy organizational culture, how to maintain ethics and integrity, how to blend professional and personal goals.

This year we have freed up a niche in our district offices and have dubbed it the Reading Room Library, if you will. Now anyone so inclined can drop by, browse, think and write. On a very small scale, it's my original image come to life. You can sit in a comfortable chair—not leather—and enjoy indirect lighting, an uncluttered telephone-free work space, soft music, if you choose. This space will hopefully offer a place to get away from the day-to-day, even for an hour.

Although the Reading Room is only one effort to provide different rhythms and structures in the work environment through the sharing of resources, it appears to be effective and comparatively inexpensive. Through a "Readers' Survey" and frequent, informal encounters, we have received much encouragement, as well as good suggestions. I suspect this success is not an aberration, but simply gives testimony to our collective hunger to establish more organizational processes that encourage different tempos, different dynamics—rhythms that seem more humane. The Reading Room buffers and encourages the occasionally overwhelming, always hectic process of working in a community college. It is an innovation designed to encourage the renewing inclinations within us.

Nancy Armes, *Consultant to the Chancellor*

For further information, contact the author at Dallas County Community College District, 701 Elm, Suite 518, Dallas, TX 75202-3299.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Pleasurable Education: A Brain-Compatible Environment for Effective Adult Student Learning

Throughout the last 15 years I have been involved in a very exciting and creative process—teaching in the community college. I have attended many training seminars on teaching techniques, enhancing student motivation, learning projects for adult learners, etc. Prior to joining the faculty at Rio Salado Community College three years ago, my experience was in "traditional" teaching/learning environments. That is, I gave lectures; and students took notes, memorized information (just long enough to take the test!), took an exam, then moved on in their academic and personal lives. It is not as if I did not care whether my students were learning or not. On the contrary, I did. But something was missing. I began to re-evaluate my training experience and philosophy of teaching. Were my students really learning information that was meaningful and applicable to their own lives? Or were they being drowned in information? Many teachers teach as they were taught. All too often, information flows from the notes of the professor into the notebooks of students without passing through the minds of either.

Studies of teaching that produces the most learning suggest that "effective" teachers use an analytical and synthetic approach to the discipline, organize the material well to make it clear, and establish rapport with their students. Most studies identify enthusiasm as important in promoting students' learning. An enthusiastic instructor is a person who cares about and values his subject matter and teaches it in a manner that expresses those feelings with the intent to encourage similar feelings in the learner. Is this enough? What part does environmental stimuli play in activating eustress (good stress) as opposed to distress in the learning process of the adult learner? What is learning and when does it occur? Is learning painful or pleasurable?

Brain research and information-processing theory are providing exciting insights into the learning process, inviting us to observe learning as a natural phenomenon—similar to the heart beating and the lungs taking in air. For the past four semesters I have taught classes utilizing strategies and techniques built on the following premises:

a. the most comprehensive learning includes an absence of threat, careful orchestration of multidimensional teaching strategies, real-life experiences, and an understanding of barriers to learning;
b. learning occurs constantly at both the conscious and unconscious levels; and when meaningful comprehensive learning does not occur, the brain continues to engage in personally meaningful activity not necessarily related to the lesson or what the teacher is teaching;
c. teaching moves like a symphony, with major themes repeated numerous times, always in a slightly different context;
d. feedback, when given properly, can encourage positive stress that motivates students to have a stronger personal sense of control, an important factor in reducing stress.

❦

Premise #1: The most comprehensive learning includes absence of threat and a relaxed learning environment.

I check out the room temperature before class to see if it is too warm or too cold. The chairs are usually arranged in a horseshoe configuration. The students can see me and each other. About five to ten minutes before class begins, I play different selections of specific baroque music. Depending on the time of day, the music invites students to relax or get re-energized for learning. Brain research has indicated the powerful influence of peripheral stimuli—the use of music, art, posters on the wall (with positive messages!), teacher's appearance, and voice intonation. Learning occurs constantly at both the conscious and unconscious level. The brain is continually attempting to categorize and pattern new information with what is already stored. The brain continues to engage in personally meaningful activity whether it is related or not to what the teacher is teaching.

Premise #2: The instructor is an ever-present influence.

As students arrive in class they are handed a personalized letter. The letter (on college stationery) is titled "Welcome to Rio Salado Community College and the Exciting World of Psychology!" The letter highlights new information and research in applied psychology, the nature and scope of psychology, the text used in class, the instructor's philosophy of the teaching/learning process (active participation and shared responsibilities). In closing, the letter indicates the instructor's pleasure in having the student in class.

The use of desirable, positive words and phrases can become an invitation and challenge to motivate student learning:

> Relax—Enjoyable—Invitation to learning—I Invite You—You Can!--You Will!—Surprise Yourself—When You Do It—You Will Learn Faster, Retain More Information and Have Fun at the Same Time!

Much too often the use of less desirable words—try, don't, difficult, hard, effort, expect, confused—can create a perceived threat to students.

Also to be taken into account are the conscious and unconscious characteristics the teacher presents to the class. Whether greeting the class warmly—"Good evening, it's good to be here with you," or recognizing an individual—"Congratulations in getting the job, Marie," projecting a sense of caring and concern for students' welfare encourages respect and trust.

Premise #3: Teaching moves like a symphony.

Brain research tells us the brain is actively engaged in matching, comparing, categorizing and patterning incoming information with already stored information. Material covered from a lesson plan could be introduced in a variety of ways—story-telling with baroque or classical music in the background, guided imagery, videos, and games. Brain research has further indicated material repeated in a variety of ways enhances long-term memory storage. When I read the story about Abraham Maslow to my classes, they experience a different view of this giant of a man in psychology who was terrified of public speaking until he was over fifty! It always amazes me the reaction from students as I "tell" the story of Maslow. The specific music used in the background invites a cognitive and affective experience. The story format describing real events portrays Maslow in a more human way, eliciting strong emotions from students. Thus, whole-brain learning takes place. Storytelling also tends to relax students.

Premise #4: Retention and long-term memory can be increased in a pleasurable, fun way.

The subject of "testing" and evaluation causes much stress in the lives of students, especially the returning adult learner. In an attempt to decrease the stress level toward "testing" and develop critical reading and thinking skills, I have students develop study guides after we have discussed two chapters in class. Study guides are developed during class time utilizing an open-book format. Multiple-choice questions are of two basic kinds. Most items are drawn fairly directly from the text. These emphasize understanding as well as rote learning, and they represent varied levels of difficulty. Interspersed throughout these traditional items are others that can be described as "general," "conceptual," or "applied." Such items typically require thought or analysis. A few of the conceptual items are quite difficult, but most simply require students to extrapolate concepts—critical reading/thinking—into new situations or to deal with examples not used in the text. Students are encouraged (and often do) to challenge me when they feel their answer is correct. They become active participants in the learning process. The study guides are used to prepare for the "Exit Inventory" they will complete before leaving the class. At that time no books or notes are used. Results from the Exit Inventories have been encouraging in demonstrating recognition and recall of previously learned "study guides." Students are pleased with the amount of information recalled on the Exit Inventory. More important, they report increased learning in a more relaxed way.

Premise #5: According to students, learning can be fun!

Student evaluations have been very encouraging, indicating a renewed interest in the learning process. "This is the most in-depth studying and learning I've had in years, and it was great (makes me want to learn more!)." "I actually enjoyed learning."

René Díaz-Lefebvre, *Instructor, Counseling/Psychology*

For further information, contact the author at Maricopa County Community College District, 3910 East Washington Street, Phoenix, AZ 85034.

Note: Dr. Díaz-Lefebvre will be presenting "Pleasurable Education" at the NISOD International Conference on Teaching Excellence, Sunday, May 21, 1989, 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Hit'm with a F.I.S.T.

Hitting students with a F.I.S.T. helps floundering grade point averages by:

F = Finding students who do not perform well on first exam.
I = Identifying standardized test scores.
S = Supporting students in their educational quest.
T = Teaching students good study skills.

❦

Step 1: F = Finding Students Who Need a "Hit"

Our recent research indicates that *grades on the first test best predict students' final course grade.* The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient for first test grade and final course grade is +.83. We use this first test grade as a critical indicator of potential academic difficulty and a useful tool for identifying students who need hitting with a F.I.S.T.

From the first test we garner two bits of information. (1) We determine each student's perception of test and study time: two noncredit questions at the end of the test *assess* whether the student thought the test was difficult, easy, or average and *determine* the student's preparation for the test in terms of hours studied. On an objective test these questions appear as two multiple-choice items. On an essay or short-answer test, these two questions are open-ended. We know that the student has a vested interest in the answers to these questions; but they provide us with a point of departure for later discussion, and most students are honest in their responses. (2) The actual test score is the second piece of important information.

For analysis of this first test score, we use an effective two-step technique. First, at the beginning of the class hour, and as soon as the exams are returned, the student completes a short questionnaire: 1) What do you consider "studying"? 2) How did you study for this test? 3) Did you miss questions based on lecture notes? 4) Did you miss questions based on the textbook? 5) Did you miss questions on application of information? 6) Did you miss questions integrating material to higher order thinking skills? Second, after the student completes this questionnaire, we conduct individual interviews, either in the corner of the classroom or out in the hallway.

Frequently, after analyzing the questionnaire and talking with the students in these short sessions, a pattern emerges. Many times we make "band-aid surgery" suggestions for rectifying study skills or test-taking skills. For example, if students miss questions of an application nature, we suggest that they consciously apply the information to their daily lives. If they miss questions from the textbook, we try to determine if the problem is a lack of reading skills or is simply the need to take more time in reading and studying the text! If we determine that "band-aid surgery" is not sufficient to help solve the problem, we recommend that the student make an appointment with us, Developmental Studies, or Counseling for additional intervention.

While the individual sessions are being conducted, other students "class edit" their exams by discussing the correct answers. (One student is provided with a corrected test and serves as arbitrator.)

❦

Step 2: I = Identifying Standardized Test Scores

The "I" in our model stands for identifying students' standardized test scores. We check college records to determine whether or not the student qualified for freshman English (Counseling's recommended scores on SAT, ACT, and ASSET determine qualification). In our research we find that students who have not qualified for freshman English tend to have more academic difficulty in our classes than those who have. We recommend to these students that they seek help through Developmental Studies to improve reading ability, writing, and study skills. With this supplemental help, students who did not qualify for freshman English stand a much greater chance of earning a passing grade in our course and less chance of withdrawing from the class. For students who qualified, there is a direct and high correlation between study time and final course grade. For students who qualified for freshman English but did poorly on our first exam, we stress the benefits of more productive study time and good study skills.

Standardized test scores are readily available through the registrar, and collecting these scores from

the registrar's computerized records does not take much time. (We compiled six classes of standardized test scores in less than an hour.)

❦

Step 3: S = Supporting Students in Their Educational Quest

"S" represents the support that students need in their educational quest. Students need to know that the instructor cares that they do well in a course and that we will help them. Sometimes just an "I care" gives students the motivation to try harder or improve study skills. In addition, we suggest resources offered by other departments on campus. Counseling offers seminars in self-esteem, career goals, time management, study habits, and many other areas of general and personal interest. Many students benefit from attending a selected number of these programs. Developmental Studies offers workshops, computerized programs, tutors, courses, and videos on study skills and test-taking. Sessions on test anxiety are available through the Developmental Studies and Counseling offices. Not only must the students *attend* the session, but they must *write* a short report on the program's content, how the program's information relates to them, and how they can use this information for personal improvement. We offer incentives to students for availing themselves of these resources by adding two bonus points to the mid-term grade for each session (up to one letter grade improvement in score).

❦

Step 4: T = Teaching Good Study Skills

The last step in hitting students with a F.I.S.T. is to teach good study skills. In our syllabus we include a copy of the SQ3R method of study. When we review the syllabus and discuss the required textbook, we demonstrate how to read the text—using this method of study. Before the first exam we discuss tips on taking objective or short-answer tests: looking through the test and answering the known questions; reading the questions, carefully noting key words; reading all responses, beginning with the last choice and moving toward the first; and so on. In addition, we provide handouts offering other specific hints for successful test-taking.

Conclusion

Prompt intervention may mean the difference between success or failure. Early intervention has proven to be very effective with students in academic difficulty, in both lowering dropout rates and raising final course grades. Hitting floundering students with a F.I.S.T. merits the attention of instructors concerned with students' academic success.

Adrian Rapp, *Instructor, Sociology*

Lynda Dodgen, *Instructor, Sociology*

For further information, contact the authors at North Harris County College, 2700 W.W. Thorne Drive, Houston, TX 77073.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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It's All in the Cards!

Lotteries, playing the odds, and gambling are social, enjoyable, and sometimes addictive activities. They do not create visions of students reviewing notes or formulating thoughts. However, an instructional modification of these activities can be used to stimulate thought, actively engage students in learning, and build camaraderie. Further, it can serve as a method of focusing attention, learning others' names, and encouraging participation.

Preparation

During the first class meeting, students put their names (as they wish to be addressed in class) on 3" x 5" cards. Nicknames are encouraged. Students are informed that these index cards will be used in a "volunteering" system to answer class questions. [Please note that the procedure for using the cards should be described only after they are collected. One year, a more "spirited" class was told, before collection, how the index cards would be used; as a result, about one-third of the cards bore the name of one popular student.]

The Game

At the beginning of the second class day, five or six questions reviewing material from the previous class are written on the overhead or blackboard. The index cards are shuffled, held face down, and one card is drawn by a student. This student reads the name on the card aloud, and the student whose name was called is allowed to select any question he/she prefers to answer. If this "volunteer" is successful, his/her card is separated from the rest, and the process continues. If the answer is incorrect, the instructor can either give the correct response or ask other questions designed to help the student "discover" the correct answer.

Care must be taken not to embarrass or degrade the student. Whether successful or not, this student is allowed to select the next card and read the name of the next "volunteer." This process continues until all the review questions have been answered. By continually separating the "volunteers" from the others, students who have not participated know that their chances of being "volunteers" are improving.

Students seem to enjoy trading barbs when their names are called; likewise, some students vow a friendly revenge. Once all students have "played," the cards are reshuffled, and the process begins again.

After the first few class periods, students have settled into the procedure. Once the instructor begins writing, the students immediately quiet down and begin skimming over their notes.

The Rules

Students will answer at least one question aloud during the semester. This creates a little motivation because most students want to demonstrate their knowledge and ability to classmates. With a class of 30, this daily 10-minute process will have actively engaged all students in approximately five class meetings.

Students are informed that this activity has no effect on their final course grade. As a result, it becomes a no-risk situation.

Students are allowed to say, "I don't know." They are informed that this response will work a couple of times, but not forever. However, once a student answers, "I don't know," that response triggers a brief review of the related material.

Variations

If you sense boredom with this approach, add variety by writing a "bonus" question. No information about the question is made available until the student selects it. If the student volunteers for that question (as opposed to its being the only question left), praise him/her for the curiosity. At times, several bonus questions can be made available in sealed envelopes. It all adds to the fun!

Conclusion

During one semester I used this activity once or twice a week. The following semester, in a sequential course, I didn't use it at all. About half of the students told me that they missed the activity, thought it was useful, and that it made the class more interesting.

James W. Taylor, *Director, Cardiorespiratory Care*

For further information, contact the author at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, 6767 West O Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009.

On the Value of "Study Groups"

In the opening lecture for my General Psychology survey course, I have always supported the "thesis" of study groups. This summer, I had occasion to test my "lip service."

❦

Two days prior to the Unit III Exam, one of my students asked: "When are you going to form study groups?" Obviously, we had had a communication breakdown! I had never intended to "formalize" this process.

However, I seized on an opportunity to conduct a research project on the usefulness of this learning strategy (without informing the students).

I had scheduled a 30-minute review, followed by a one-hour multiple-choice exam, for the next day. I altered the schedule to a 30-minute review, followed by one hour of "study groups."

That afternoon I created a random grouping. I arranged the 30 students into five groups. I identified the five students who had received the highest scores (total) on the first two exams. They were each, based on alphabetical order in the gradebook, assigned to one of the five groups. I repeated this procedure for the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth lowest scores. Theoretically, the five groups met the criteria for acceptable randomness.

I already had a "control group," based on previous research. (I routinely examine the data on my exams in an attempt to evaluate my delivery system. My five exams in this survey course are 60 points, four foil, and multiple choice.)

Historically, the mean differential between Unit Exam II and Unit Exam I has been approximately +1 point. I have attributed this difference to students becoming familiar with my teaching and testing "style" and the mutual "rapport" we have developed.

The difference in mean scores between Unit Exams II, III, IV, and V has been statistically insignificant. The "norm" difference varies from +.2 to -.2.

❦

I assigned the five study groups to five separate classrooms and advised them as follows:

1. They had one hour before the period was formally over, but they were required to stay together for at least 30 minutes. (Four groups met for the entire hour; one group "split" after 30 minutes.)
2. I would be available for review, clarification, etc. (None of the groups "summoned" me; but I "stuck my head" into each room, and four of the groups posed some query.)

❦

I eagerly awaited the results; after all, I believe in the principles of educational psychology! Relevant data are as follows:

N = 30
Unit II Mean = 49.7
Unit III Mean = 52.5
Difference = +2.8 (Study Groups)

Statistically significant? Looking at the grading procedure, it appears to be.

Students are graded on a percentage basis:

			Difference
90% (x 60 pts.)	= 54 =	A	— 6 pts.
80% (x 60 pts.)	= 48 =	B	— 6 pts.
70% (x 60 pts.)	= 42 =	C	— 6 pts.
60% (x 60 pts.)	= 36 =	D	— 6 pts.

In light of this predetermined system, it would seem that the "study groups" accounted for nearly one-half of a grade point differential.

❦

I plan to replicate this experiment. I also plan to alter the variables slightly, by comparing Unit III to Unit IV and Unit IV to Unit V. Study groups have earned a place in my instructional strategies repertoire.

Kaye Young, *Instructor, Psychology*

For further information, contact the author at North Iowa Area Community College, 500 College Drive, Mason City, IA 50401.

Susanne D. Roueche, Editor

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A Scrapbook of Relevance

Motivating Adult Basic Education (ABE) students to read on a regular basis and to develop skill in reading are constant challenges for instructors interested in the promotion of functional literacy. One key to positive motivation is the selection of instructional materials written at appropriate reading levels, with sufficient interest to hold student attention and special relevance to issues and challenges that students face daily.

Alberta Vocational Centre implemented a ten-week program in which relevance of subject matter for writing and reading would be given highest priority. It was designed to motivate students to read, to develop vocabulary and word attack skills, and to increase general knowledge.

The program followed the model of Individual Program Prescription (IPP), used successfully in special education and gifted programs. Students were assigned the task of selecting and developing a topic in which they would become expert. Each week the students gathered two or three pieces of information on their topic. They shared this information with the class, thereby increasing everyone's general knowledge. Ultimately, the goal was for each student *to produce a scrapbook* as a finished product.

Initially, the instructor helped students select a topic: (1) they were cautioned against choosing topics that were too broad or too narrow; (2) they were coached about information sources and information types; (3) they were provided with an orientation to the library; (4) they were encouraged to consider using specifically-named community resources—e.g., various government departments, newspaper morgues, police departments, and even travel agencies; and (5) they were encouraged to be creative and divergent in their thinking. Xeroxing an article from an encyclopedia, taking clippings from magazines and newspapers, paraphrasing longer technical tracts, and writing drafts of structured interviews were all considered fair game. The objective was to gather information that could be organized and illustrated in *scrapbook form*.

Students were encouraged to collect information during the first three weeks of the program. Once an adequate amount of material had been collected, students were instructed on appropriate organizing principles that they might use to structure their projects—e.g., chronological (historical), cause (effect), least to most, and general to specific. At this time students also were advised of the criteria that would be used to evaluate their projects—e.g., quantity of material, organization, and overall appearance.

Students researched a wide range of topics: AIDS, impaired drivers, Nepal, child abuse, the National Hockey League, motor vehicle accidents, tornadoes, parent-finding, clothes design, phenomena in space, history of Hong Kong, Rottweiler dogs, and native cultural ceremonies.

They used a broad range of research skills to complete their projects. One student discovered that the City of Edmonton had a Rottweiler on the dog squad. As a result of her inquiry and expression of interest, she was interviewed and photographed; these records of her work were significant additions to her scrapbook. Another student used the word processor to assemble the history of the National Hockey League, including team composition on a year-by-year basis. Still another student conducted structured interviews with adults who had been sexually abused as children. (Some of these adults had volunteered their stories after the school grapevine had indicated that she was working on the topic.) One student researched the topic of "impaired driving." Having lost members of her family in a motor vehicle accident caused by an impaired driver, she was initially intolerant of the drivers. However, her project exposed her to information about alcohol and Alcoholics Anonymous; she came to understand that the issue was complex, involving preventative treatment and education.

Students reported that they were sharing information (networking), meeting new people, and talking about new issues and topics over coffee.

Relevance is a critical issue in Adult Basic Education. It is prudent for us to listen and respond to the customers of our service—the students in our classrooms.

William Green, *Research Officer*

For further information, contact the author at Alberta Vocational Centre, Room 224, 10215 - 108 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1L6, CANADA.

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

Preparing for Biology Exams

Several of my former students have shared with me how they successfully prepared for their exams. I share these successful study methods, at the beginning of each semester, with my newest students.

❦

I hope that you have already established a successful method of study in your previous classes. I also hope you will quickly establish a new method of preparation if you have been dissatisfied with your performance in a science class or feel you will need a new method for this class. [Note: If you have a method to add to this list, please feel free to inform your instructor.]

1. Read over your class notes on a regular basis. Once a day, seven days a week, spend time reading all notes taken to date. [Variations: once a day, five days or three days a week]

2. Copy over your class notes on a regular basis. After each class or before the next class, copy your class notes. Make corrections on the notes and add any information previously omitted. Recopy again as needed.

3. Borrow the class notes from a classmate on a regular basis. Copy these notes and make comparisons with your own. Make a new set of notes that combines the two. Recopy again as needed.

4. Record the lecture and play back the tape as a means of review. Replay as needed. Make a complete transcript of the taped lecture by which to study.

5. Read the textbook chapter(s) that cover(s) the lecture(s) before the material is presented in the lecture. Or read the textbook chapter(s) that cover(s) the lecture topic(s) after the material is presented in the lecture. Or read both before and after the lecture.

6. Transfer your lecture notes to 3" x 5" cards. Each card represents a single topic or concept. Read over the cards on a regular basis—perhaps once a day.

7. Read the lecture notes aloud.

8. Explain the material to someone else.

9. Have someone read aloud the important words that must be defined and check your responses (definition and example).

10. Make physical models that represent the concepts—e.g., a model of an atom, compound, or cell. Make a drawing to represent the concepts.

11. Take the test objectives and check to make certain the review material covers the test objectives.

❦

While the methods varied, they all involved a regular time commitment outside of class and the realization that course material should be understood, not just memorized.

Lloyd L. Willis, *Associate Professor, Biology*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Goal-setting and Goal-using: Developing Personal Meaning To Enhance the Use of Learning Strategies

In an attempt to respond to the needs of educationally disadvantaged students, many post-secondary settings have created courses or independent study programs to teach learning and study strategies. A number of these courses have been developed by studying the academic behaviors of successful learners. The specific methods and strategies used by these successful students have been identified and materials have been developed to teach these procedures to less successful students. This approach has produced significant gains for some students. Yet for other students, who do not know or are unclear about what they would like to accomplish in college, this approach has not been as successful. It appears, for these students, that what is lacking is a personal context from which they can develop an understanding of how a learning skills program can help them attain their life goals.

One approach to solving this problem is to help students develop and use a set of long- and short-term goals to help them guide their academic behavior. The primary purpose of this approach is to help students discover how learning strategies and tactics can be important and/or useful in their own lives. By discovering a relationship between improved learning skills and the process of achieving personally important goals, the learning strategies become integrated into a personal context of things that are valued and strived for by the individual.

To help students develop a personal context in which they see the relevance of learning strategies to the attainment of their goals, a series of goal-setting and goal-using exercises have been developed. These exercises have been field-tested with more than 1500 students who have participated in a learning-to-learn course taught in the Department of Educational Psychology at The University of Texas at Austin. (See Innovation Abstracts, Vol. X, No. 11, for a description of this course.) The exercises are designed to help students focus on the following types of questions:

1. What do I want out of my life? What do I want to experience, achieve, and/or obtain?
2. How committed am I to the attainment of these goals?
3. How important is my college education to the attainment of these goals?
4. How do my courses this semester help in the achievement of my long-term goals?
5. If college is important to the attainment of these goals and I also am committed to these goals, then what strategies and methods am I presently using to help me achieve these goals?
6. In the past, how successful have these methods and strategies been in helping me reach my academic goals?
7. If they have not been successful, what are some methods and strategies that seem to be successful for other students?

The goal-setting and goal-using exercises that have been developed focus on long- and short-term goals and their interrelationship to each other. The long-term focus helps the students develop personal meaning, which provides an overall motivation to be in college. The short-term focus helps translate abstract long-term goals into concrete actions that can be used to guide daily behaviors. The focus on the interrelationship between long- and short-term goals provides the needed integration of the students' long-term strategic pursuits (e.g., college degree), with their shorter-term practical pursuits (e.g., knowledge and skills from a particular class), and even their shorter-term task pursuits (e.g., use of reading skills).

At the long-term level, students begin by identifying what they would like to experience, achieve, and obtain during their lifetime. This process begins by having the students brainstorm long-term academic, occupational, social, and personal goals. Students are asked to evaluate and prioritize their goals in each of the different areas to see if they are compatible with each other and if they meet the criteria of a useful and effective goal (specific, measurable, challenging, realistic, and with a stated completion date).

The next step is to have the students assess the role that college plays in the attainment of these goals. The students rate, on a scale of one to ten (one being very low and ten being very high), how important their college education is for the accomplishment of their long-term goals. The students are then asked to explain these ratings. This step provides the opportunity to develop a relationship between their present activities and their long-term pursuits.

Students are then asked to explain and/or develop a rationale for how the classes they are taking during the current semester can help them to attain their long-term goals. For some classes this tends to be an easy task, but for classes that the student feels are not interesting or not relevant, the activity helps to increase their interest level and motivation by developing a connection between their classes and their long-term goals.

Once students have identified and clarified how their college education is helping them to attain their long-term goals, they are asked to rate and then explain their level of commitment to the goals they have developed. This step is seen as critical to the determination of the effort and persistence that will be put forth by the student in goal attainment. If students are not committed to the attainment of their goals, little effort or persistence can be expected.

Students then clarify further the present status of their goals by discussing how far they have come in achieving them and by reflecting on what they know about themselves, the present situation, and the potential methods and strategies they could use to help them move closer to the attainment of their goals. This information is used by the students to develop short-term subgoals to either eliminate uncertainty about their commitment to their long-term goals or move them closer to the goals accomplishment.

These short-term subgoals are evaluated against the criteria of a useful goal, and tactics and strategies to accomplish the short-term subgoals are brainstormed. A strategic plan is then created using their subgoals, their knowledge about themselves and the task, and their brainstormed tactics and strategies. This strategic plan is implemented, and the student keeps a journal that is designed to foster active monitoring and adjustment of the plan if needed. A final evaluation step encourages the student to determine the relative success or failure of the plan, its implementation, and the continued usefulness of the goal.

To develop short-term goal-setting and -using, students begin the learning skills class by writing down what they hope to achieve in this course as well as their other courses. Many times the students' initial class goals are quite global and vague. Yet this exercise provides an important experience in the process of setting, clarifying, and then using goals in an academic pursuit.

Short-term goal-setting/using and their integration with long-term goals start at the beginning of the semester when students complete several assessment measures to determine their academic strengths and weaknesses. After goal-setting skills have been discussed, students reexamine their pre-course assessment scores and write personally meaningful self-improvement short-term goals. These improvement goals are then integrated with the student's semester goals, as well as the student's short-term subgoals that were designed to help the student move closer to his or her long-term goals.

Through these integrative assignments students gain experience with goal-setting, clarifying, and using, as well as developing a personal relationship between the knowledge and skills they are learning, the classes they are taking, and the long-term goals they would like to attain during their lifetime. As students begin to understand that effective learning in college is necessary for them to meet their goals, they are more likely to have enhanced appreciation for the value of learning strategies; this improves the likelihood that students' use of the learning skills will be transferred to other learning situations.

We have found the integration of both goal-setting/using and learning strategies in a learning-to-learn course to be both useful and exciting. Assignments pertaining to goals have been reported by students to be among the most enlightening and thought-provoking in the course. They often find that this activity helps to bring their coursework into better focus such that they understand how it may be important in their own lives. We have also found that students who invest themselves in goal exploration tend to take greater responsibility for their own actions and experience enhanced intrinsic motivation to succeed academically. Essentially, their learning becomes a more autonomous, self-controlled process.

Paul A. Schutz, D. Scott Ridley, Robert S. Glanz,
Graduate Students, Educational Psychology

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Survival Strategies for Nursing Students

A new class of nursing students is admitted to your two-year nursing program—a new troop of rookies who do not have a clue as to how to survive the next two years of an intense nursing program.

The Midland College Associate Degree Nursing faculty wished to ease the transition from citizen to nursing student enrolled in an intense program of study. The co-founders of the program, having had teaching experience in other nursing schools, agreed that these students were older and non-traditional and that most attrition was due to the "reality shock" of the nursing curriculum. Adult students were overwhelmed with numerous responsibilities, little free time, tension, inadequate child care, and lack of financial resources. Observations revealed that spouses/families/significant others also were not prepared for the changes which would occur within the family unit as a result of having a nursing student in the household.

With this information in mind, the faculty introduced "Survival Skills for Nursing Students." Spouses, children, parents, and significant others were invited to this session, held in the Simulation Lab, with faculty and staff. The purpose of this location was two-fold: This setting introduced the students' support systems to the learners' "home away from home" and allowed the students' children to view and/or manipulate some of the equipment—i.e., electric hospital beds, wheelchairs, mannequins, etc. Introductions included the faculty and their teaching responsibilities and the nursing department secretary who would know the students' whereabouts in case a family member experienced an emergency and needed to get in touch.

The Survival Strategies session included specific information about:

1. Student responsibilities
   - A. To attend clinical labs which begin as early as 6:30 a.m.
   - B. To utilize audio-visuals and periodicals within the Learning Resource Center
   - C. To limit the number of allowable absences in class and clinical
   - D. To prioritize obligations
   - E. To recognize heavy time demands
2. Potential role conflict within the family
   - A. Spending more time at school or in study, with less time available for the family
   - B. Providing for child care—i.e., sick child and/or taking the child to the pediatrician
   - C. Scheduling one day of the week strictly for activities not related to school
3. Peer support
   - A. Big Brother/Big Sister as a resource person
   - B. Interpersonal skills
   - C. Time management (including lack of sleep)
   - D. Written assignments
   - E. Stress control

The initial Survival Strategies session (1982) began what has become a tradition at Midland College. Since its inception, however, the program has been designed and offered by second-year students during the first week of each fall semester. The program has been expanded to include spouses advising spouses and children talking to children. Innovative presentations now include videotapes, skits, spoofs, and tours. As well, it is at this session that Big Brothers and Big Sisters are introduced to designated first-year students.

Each year the presentation is evaluated by the first-year students. Faculty and students continue to give the session high marks and feel that this sharing of information early in the educational process has contributed to the average (and remarkably low) attrition rate of 17% in the nursing program. Of the students who choose to leave the program, only two stated that they were overwhelmed and not prepared for the amount of time required for program completion.

A Survival Strategies session is a cost-effective investment in the education of nursing students. Only a little time and creativity is needed to develop a family atmosphere of caring and trust enjoyed by the Midland College Associate Degree nursing students.

Eileen Piwetz, *Chair, Health Sciences*

For further information, contact the author at Midland College, 3600 N. Garfield, Midland, TX 79705-6399.

The Study Partner Program

We have been struggling with the problem of finding ways to assist students in mastering the volume of information in our accounting and business law classes. At the same time, we have searched for a way to incorporate even more time-demand items, such as writing-across-the-curriculum and essay testing.

In 1986, as we were contemplating ways of improving classroom study skills and test performance, through the college mail came an Innovation Abstracts, "Tandem Testing" (Volume VIII, Number 29). The title caught our attention; and once we had read the article, its subject piqued our interest. We began to experiment in two of our classes. The results were encouraging enough to continue with others. Our successes with this teaching strategy encourage us to suggest it to instructors in our own and other disciplines.

Note: The Study Partner Program must begin with the instructor's decision to give up traditionally-held views of "individual" homework and test performance. They must be replaced with a "team" view—where students share, not only the homework assignments, but also the test-taking and the resulting grades.

We were reluctant to leave the time-honored security of every student doing his own work and earning his own grade. For too long we had thought of cooperative effort on a test as "cheating." But we moved past that belief and introduced students to the program.

The Strategy

We begin class on the first day by introducing the Study Partner Program, along with the other class activities. We explain that it will be easier to master the volume of information required in the course if the students form small study groups. As support for this notion, we explain that the learning process will be more permanent if they add verbal discussion to the standard learning tools of reading the book, listening to the lecture, and writing the homework. We explain how the program should work and what is expected of each student in the role of being a good partner. Students are encouraged to become acquainted with others sitting nearby, by talking before and after class, and to form into working groups after the first week, meeting outside of class to do homework and conferring by telephone.

Up to this point the students listen politely but are generally unimpressed by the Study Partner Program—and rightly so. They have heard all of that before. Then we lay out the final point: Students will take their tests with their partners and share the grade. Student interest picks up right away!

We design every test so that each two-person team is a testing partnership. Primarily, we use short-answer essay-style questions. The partners are free to discuss the questions and their answers quietly until they reach agreement; frequently, each partner writes a portion of each answer. The team submits one test paper with both names; the test grade is recorded for both members.

Several students can work on a study team, but only two students are allowed on a test-taking team. Some students prefer to work alone, and we allow solo test-taking. Whatever the arrangement, the same test is taken by all.

While we assist the students in forming initial working groups, they are free to choose their own test-taking partners and free to change them at any time. Thus, the hard-working student can "dump" a non-working partner; the lazy students soon feel the pressure to get busy with the assignments.

Program Evaluation

It is difficult to measure the results in a purely quantitative fashion, but we feel several positive outcomes. As teachers, it is rewarding to stand in our classrooms on test days and observe the amount of additional learning that is occurring in the midst of that quiet buzz of voices. When we overhear such telling bits of conversation as ". . . but he said this . . ." or ". . . is what the book said," we know that the Study Partner Program is working.

The student drop-out rate has decreased. Students tell us that the added support provided by the homework group makes them feel less lost and helpless.

We can add material, and thus be more comprehensive on tests, without discouraging the test-takers. We can ask for responses to more difficult concepts. Interestingly, asking more questions has not created a higher grade curve. Test anxiety has been reduced.

We have not used the Partner Program in every class, but it appears to work best in those classes where the material is especially complicated.

Larry Williams, *Instructor, Business Education*

Bob Fullerton, *Associate Professor, Mathematics*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Blueprint for Hiring College Faculty

Traditional hiring practices are riddled with perception problems. It is very difficult to make valid judgments of job candidates; and, as a result, people are often hired on the strength of superficial impressions. In particular, research has shown that most employers emphasize the employment interview which, as a hiring tool, has an unimpressive record in terms of reliability and validity. Interviewers have great confidence in their ability to select the right person for the job; however, they often weigh the same information differently and fall prey to the "halo" effect. The following strategy is recommended for increasing the validity of hiring decisions.

A Selection Strategy

Shortlisting

Applicants should be shortlisted according to a numerical weighting of job qualifications—i.e., points are given for education and experience. There should, however, be maximum values attached to each category so that qualified applicants are not screened out against individuals with more than the required education or experience. Twenty years of experience does not necessarily guarantee more skill than does ten. Remember, as Robert Half says, "A resumé is nothing more than a balance sheet without liabilities."

Presentation

Each shortlisted candidate should be invited to present a 15-minute lesson on the subject that he/she would be teaching. For example, the candidate could make a presentation on the value of being a student in his/her particular field. The presentation would be rated by the search committee on a predetermined numerical scale and then followed by a structured interview.

Structured Interview

A structured interview, using the following guidelines, tends to increase the validity and reliability of the selection decision (Campion, Pursell, and Brown, 1988): i) develop questions based on job analysis; ii) ask the same questions of each candidate; iii) anchor the rating scales for scoring answers with examples and illustrations; iv) have an interview panel record and rate answers; v) consistently administer the process to all candidates.

Optional Written Exercise

Candidates may be asked to participate in a written exercise. For example, the exercise could address a problem situation with a student or a colleague. Once again, a numerical rating scale and a sample answer would be used to score the response.

Reference Check

After the top candidate has been identified through the numerical weightings, there should be a careful reference check. The preferred candidate's background information should be verified; additional performance-related data should be obtained from previous employers. [Caution: The consent of the candidate should be obtained before utilizing a "network approach" to checking references—each reference identified as such by the candidate provides the name of another.]

Evaluating the Hiring Process

Search committee members rarely receive proper or accurate feedback regarding the outcomes of their hiring decisions: They seldom learn about the performance of the individuals they chose to hire. It is essential to maintain a record of the results of all hiring decisions and answer, on some appropriate schedule, such questions as: Is the faculty member still with the college? Is his/her performance satisfactory? It is critical that search committee members gather data to develop a realistic perspective on their abilities to make good hiring decisions.

Campion, M. A., E. D. Pursell, and B. K. Brown. "Structured Interviewing: Raising the Psychometric Properties of the Employment Interview," in Personnel Psychology, Vol. 41(1), pp. 25-42.

Ken Robb, *Manager, Human Resources & Staff Development*

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Selecting A Chief Instructional Officer: The Palomar College Experience

Academic search committees are much like the little girl with the curl: when they are good they are very very good, but when they are bad they are horrid. A bad search is a frustrating and expensive waste of time if a successful candidate cannot be selected; selection of a candidate by a sloppy, rushed, or rigged process may devastate an institution. A good search is composed of two diverse but complementary components: process and philosophy. Each is critical to the eventual success of the search and each requires proper care and planning for appropriate implementation.

During 1987 and 1988 the Palomar Community College District undertook a nationwide search for an Assistant Superintendent/Vice President for Instruction with a target date for employment of July 1, 1988. Appointment of the search committee occurred in the spring of 1987 with the active part of the search scheduled to begin the following September. Each area of the college, including faculty, classified staff, executive administration, middle managers, and students, independently selected representatives. College President George Boggs charged the committee to recruit, interview, and recommend the best candidates available for his final consideration and recommendation to the Governing Board. Upon nomination by the committee he appointed me chair, while agreeing that the committee would be free to select a co-chair to preside in my absence, as necessary. At the organizational meeting the newly formed committee received information on recruitment, affirmative action, and legal requirements from the Director of Human Resource Services and Affirmative Action, an ex officio member. The committee agreed to meet again in September. At this time the President, having given us our charge and a deadline, stepped away from the process and allowed us to proceed with the assigned task. He received regular reports from the chair but allowed us the flexibility to operate independently for the remainder of the search.

The committee convened again in the fall to review timelines and establish ground rules. We determined a quorum (9 of 13 members) and decided to keep and ratify minutes of our meetings. The Chair and Director of Human Resources proposed a timeline developed by working backwards from the target employment date. This schedule considered and allowed adequate time for advertising and recruiting, developing forms and questions, screening applications, selecting applicants to interview, checking references, and making site visits to finalists' home institutions.

A difficult problem for any search committee is scheduling regular meeting times around the individual calendars of a very busy group of classroom instructors, administrators, and staff. Each committee member submitted a complete schedule which I plotted in graph form. Miraculously, a free hour appeared each week. (If this is not the case, the graph will likely show some hours in which only one or two people are unavailable. In that case, I recommend selecting two alternate meeting times and staggering the meetings between these times. While one person may have to be absent from a meeting, it won't be the same person each time.) Scheduling the interview blocks as far in advance as possible is also critical so that everyone may clear calendars or obtain substitutes for the period covered. We agreed that regular business would be conducted at each meeting once a quorum was established but that we would not consistently backtrack due to the absence of any member. (It may be appropriate to establish a maximum number of absences before a member is replaced; however, this was not a problem with our group.)

Three subcommittees worked to develop an application form and screening documents from the applications and interview questions. We found it much easier to edit forms and questions prepared by the subcommittees than to create them as a group of 13. The assistance of the Human Resources staff proved invaluable. Competent support staff and excellent advice from the Director ensured smooth operation within legal and institutional requirements. Acknowledgment of this work when the process is over is both appropriate and appreciated.

Proper scheduling allowed for efficient use of time. For example, screening forms were developed during

Using the Desktop Computer in the Auto Shop

I had been looking for ways to bring the teaching of community college auto mechanics into the 1990's. What I discovered was that auto shop students love using a desktop computer if you, the teacher, will take the time to get them interested and then guide them keystroke-by-keystroke until they catch on.

One summer I worked in the VIP program at the local Pontiac dealership. I saw how they used computers to prepare bills, inventory parts, and analyze profit and loss. One night I went home and decided to try to duplicate their repair order form on my Apple computer. After about two hours of experimenting, I had reproduced the essential features of their mainframe computer business form. My form allows the student to enter the flat-rate times for each job operation and the number of parts and their unit cost. Then, after two keystrokes the computer sub-totals the labor charges, the parts charges, and the sales tax, and calculates a grand total.

The service manager at the Pontiac dealership talked about effective labor rates, and I soon learned that a labor rate was a measure of job effectiveness. That's when I created the back side of the repair order form—which is the part that the customer doesn't see. On it the business manager accounts for all of the costs of running his business so that he knows how much profit he is making. [Students learn how to use a similar spreadsheet to calculate their weekly paycheck if they continue to perform with the same effective labor rate, to calculate the costs of running the business, and to calculate the bottom-line profit on each job or series of jobs. They play "what if" games with the spreadsheet to determine what happens to paychecks and profits when operating parameters change (such as pay per flat-rate hour) in the spreadsheet.]

None of these operations requires specialized software. All of these jobs are completed on Appleworks, a combined word processor, database, and spreadsheet. Once students know how to operate each of these modules, only their imaginations limit what they can do.

Here is how I use my computer to enhance my effectiveness as an auto shop teacher. 1) I write my workbooks on word processing software. They can be revised every semester as the technical content of my course changes. 2) I write purchase orders. I keep all of them in a file for future reference at budget writing time. 3) I write my program review. As the data for the various parts become available, I incorporate them into that report. 4) I write all my memos. I find that I get better responses to my requests. 5) I buy software to drill my students in auto terminology, individualized for each class. 6) I make banners (using PrintShop) advertising upcoming classes. 7) I write my tests. Tests can easily be revised and updated. 8) I write my lecture notes. The lecture notes are used to instruct students in using my workbooks. 9) I make copies of my lecture notes and make them available to students. They can use the notes to help find correct answers to the workbook questions. 10) I invented a course called Computerized Shop Management to make my auto students computer literate: They write a letter advertising a sale on lube, oil, and filters at their place of employment; use a spelling checker to proofread their letters; make a banner advertising the sale item; make a database file listing their customers and manipulate that file to select only special customers so they can send a customized letter promoting special services; and make a spreadsheet to calculate their paycheck.

Finally, I show them how to use a repair order spreadsheet—enter the flat rate times the cost and number of parts; and the computer automatically calculates the total labor and parts bill, adds the tax to the parts subtotal, and gives a grand total. Students use the data to calculate the bottom-line profit earned on that one bill, or they enter all the bills for a week and find out how much the shop earned. They play "what if" with the spreadsheet to determine the amount of their paycheck if they beat the flat-rate time and if they take twice the flat-rate time to finish the job. Then they see what happens to bottom-line profits when they double their salary.

My pilot class included a wide diversity of students. Their ages ranged from 18 to 55. Some were current students, some returning students, and some current managers of small independent garages. The payoff for a teacher comes when the student tells you that he used to spend all afternoon performing an operation that the computer just completed in seconds. That makes teaching exciting!

Terry Ristig, *Auto Mechanics Coordinator*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Enhancing Critical Thinking: Linear vs. Volume Learning

It has often been said: "Too many times information goes from the notebook of the instructor to the notebook of the student without going through the mind of either." We need to ask ourselves as educators why this happens and, more important, why we let this happen in our own classrooms.

A major problem throughout our educational system is that students are allowed to be passive learners. But in many cases we as educators are also passive instructors. Learning must be a function of personal experience; students must see real and lasting relationships between what they learn and the time spent in learning. The absence rate in our classes is high, and the loss to students is real. In many cases, students do not know what hard work really is and have never experienced it. In far too many cases, students tend not to think about what they should be thinking about while in class.

We need to seek positive solutions to the problem of the passive learning syndrome: address the quality of the learning environment, engage the student in the topic at hand, capture the student's imagination to get him/her active in the learning process, develop a passion to enlighten the student to learning, encourage the student to think in terms of self-image, and be able to connect this same image in reference to the materials to be learned. We need to place ourselves as instructors in the student role—in the individual learning role—in order to understand what is going on in the student's mind; then we can relate *with* them, not *to* them. We must learn to "mind line" with our students.

We likely would agree that all of our students should have the following qualifications when they enroll in our courses:

1. adequate mathematics (or discipline-specific) skills,
2. average degree of motivation to learn,
3. basic background of formal thought,
4. acceptable level of curiosity.

However, we often find our students missing some or all of these qualifications for survival.

Year after year, those of us who teach mathematics and science go into our classrooms, try to teach students how to solve problems, assign homework that forces them to practice problem solving, provide audio-tutorial or computer-assisted instruction programs that drill them, subject them to exams that test their ability to solve problems, and then make the following observations about their performance:

1. some students can't even work the problems covered in lectures;
2. some students can work problems they have seen before, but they can't work similar problems;
3. some students can work problems that are similar to those they have worked before, but they can't handle problems that ask them to go one step further.

At least part of the trouble that students have with problem solving in introductory chemistry courses must be attributed to the fact that chemists have always tried to teach their students how to solve problems by doing nothing more than working examples. In recent years, however, chemists have begun to realize the importance of general strategies in problem solving.

Steps to Problem Solving

There are several stages or steps involved in problem solving:

1. finding the problem (recognizing that a problem exists),
2. representing the problem (understanding the gap to be bridged),
3. planning the solution (choosing a method for bridging the gap),
4. carrying out the plan,
5. evaluating the solution,
6. consolidating gains (learning from the experience of solving the problem).

No matter which model of problem solving we use, there is invariably an early stage; its goal is understanding and identifying the problem. This is a stage where relevant information is extracted and where the elements of the problem are juggled until the problem is transformed into a problem the student understands. *Understanding a problem requires that the student recognize the initial and goal stages.*

It is up to us to de-bug the program and re-program these students in order to teach problem-solving

techniques. Thinking and learning are skills that can be taught!

Teaching These Skills

One method of instruction to approach the aforementioned problems is to utilize area or volume learning in our classrooms rather than linear learning. [It also incorporates the writing-across-the-curriculum concept into our courses. The simple act of writing is a physical activity and a method of recording one's thought processes. The act of writing is also a very good means of generating thought. The actual reading of what has been written creates knowledge through the thinking process.]

Mathematics and science instructors realize that students often solve problems backwards; they do not use a logical approach to problem solving. They look at solutions to sample problems in the book and then extract the information from the verbal question. They also look at the answers to the even-numbered problems in the back of the book and then proceed to work out the solutions.

Why not capitalize on the process they already utilize in their learning and approach it in a logical manner? Give an example solution to a problem; then have students write out the question or problem to fit the clues found in the solution. This activity would allow them to verbalize the solution to the problem at hand. Instructors could encourage such thinking by giving students the solutions to a few problems in the text and having them write the clues from the solution, identifying the problem which best matches the solution.

This exercise would enable students to extract information both forwards and backwards. Eventually, it would allow them to extract information from a word problem with a forward logical approach rather than with the backdoor method. In science, laboratory activities, as well as lectures, utilize more area or volume learning; mathematics is more involved with linear learning. Science is like a history course taught in definite units of information; mathematics is more a step-by-step sequence of information building. However, both methods still involve:

1. organization of information,
2. decision making,
3. critical thinking,
4. problem solving.

Summary

Students need additional clues to problem solving. We must allow them to build a broader base of clues with which to solve problems. Utilizing a broader diversity of instructional modes in our courses and including more of the five senses into our learning activities should help students build that critical broader base.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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An Experiment with Freshman Education Majors in a College Mathematics Course

Teaching mathematics in the elementary classroom is a skill/art to be developed during all four years of a student's undergraduate education. Too often, education majors are not well-equipped with good mathematics teaching techniques. Many times these future teachers admit that, "Math is not my favorite subject," or worse, "I never was very good at math." These comments—together with my own personal observations of algebra, statistics, and calculus students who were able to solve an equation, calculate a descriptive measure, or differentiate a function only to get bogged down when a fractional root required checking—led me to speculate about their basic skills in arithmetic.

Educators and psychologists, whose theories on maturation and development stress "readiness" for toilet training, reading, and a myriad of other skills, lead mathematicians to speculate on the optimum age for learning various mathematics skills. For example, one might wonder if the age and grade level for the understanding of the concept of fractions is appropriately placed in the curriculum.

As a mathematics instructor at Burlington County College, I (with the support of a faculty fellowship) developed and introduced a new module into our mathematics course for education and liberal arts majors. This pilot program was designed to place future teachers in the classroom of a master elementary teacher who was conducting a lesson on any facet of rational numbers (a topic which we cover in our text). These college freshmen were to observe the teacher and class; answer a checklist; and design a visual, worksheet, or handout appropriate to the lesson observed. (Provision was made for students who were not education majors. These students and I agreed upon a mutually-acceptable alternate assignment relating their major to the topic of rational numbers.)

This classroom observation assignment was in addition to activities in our full syllabus and completely on the student's own time. Anyone familiar with the profile of a community college student knows that he/she typically works a part-time job while juggling classload and family responsibilities. Also, many commute to class by bus. Needless to say, I thought that this additional assignment would create problems for my students, but I felt strongly that their effort would be rewarded by an exciting exposure to a talented teacher role model. [Because this was an experiment and I fully anticipated that some students would be unable to fit this assignment into their busy schedules, I decided to assign only ten points of our 400-point grading system to this requirement.]

Each student requested the school he/she wished to visit, and I was to contact the principals. I had no idea that each student would choose a different school! My task proved to be very time-consuming. The principals, superintendents, and curriculum coordinators with whom I spoke were, to a person, very cooperative and professional. Some of our local elementary schools, I later discovered, are fairly inundated by similar requests from surrounding four-year institutions.

Midway through the semester one student decided to do her "classroom observation." At the subsequent class meeting she presented me with a big smile and a thick portfolio which she referred to as her "report." That evening I was overwhelmed with the length, detail, and enthusiasm of this ten-point assignment. She included a very interesting three-page narrative of her observation (this was not required) and had developed not one, but two, innovative games which could have been used for the lesson she observed. Sharing this report at our next class meeting served as a catalyst to the other students. Exciting things began to happen. Some students would seek me out, even on days when we had no class, to tell me about their "observation." They apparently took my admonition to "dress appropriately" to heart, and many very well-dressed students came directly from the elementary school to share their experiences with me.

It soon became a habit for many of us to arrive a few minutes early to class so that we could discuss and share someone's "observation." We still had a very full syllabus of goals and objectives to cover, so these bits of sharing had to be brief.

I continue to be delighted with the keen insights and comments from freshmen college students. [Note: A

classroom observation check/comment sheet provides structure to the observation activity.]

> 6th grade middle school: "The teacher was in total control throughout the class period. It seemed as if the teacher and students had a mutual respect for each other (like mother and children)."
>
> 5th grade elementary: "He . . . favored the girls to the boys—especially those who got most of the questions right. He spoke in a soft monotone voice, which I feel contributed to the restlessness of the children after 25 minutes into the class. The children reacted to him eagerly; they appeared to like him. He showed me samples of their work from September to date, and there were remarkable jumps in grades."
>
> 6th grade parochial: "Every student answered at least one question. The students had to explain how they got the answer which showed that they seemed to understand the material."
>
> 6th grade elementary: "The game is called fraction basketball. The socio-economic background of the students was a contributing factor to the development of the game. If there was one thing that the students knew, it was basketball."
>
> College-aged class for the deaf (my student signs for the deaf): "The teacher seemed to go too quickly for the students. She began erasing the board before some of them were finished copying. I think she should have used an overhead projector; then they could read her lips as well as copy the notes."
>
> 6th grade elementary: "[The teacher] is a very enthusiastic person; she really caught the class's attention. She was always moving around, or drawing on the board so the students could visualize what she was explaining. It is important to have your students interested in what you're teaching. [The teacher] joked around as she taught and used examples that the students could relate to, such as food and games. The few students who did not catch on as quickly sat quietly in their chairs and would not look directly at the teacher."
>
> 7th grade (accelerated) middle school: "I could tell that the students were understanding the material, because the teacher made sure they understood. She would call on everyone, separately, of course, checking up on each of them. If a child was talking while she was, an 'excuse me' would shut them up—that happened rarely, though."
>
> 7th grade middle school: "The students were complimented when they gave the right answer and were reinforced by examples when they were unsure or if they gave the wrong answer."

In addition to these written comments, I was surprised to learn that most of the observed teachers had done much more than allow a college freshman to sit silently in the rear of the classroom. Most of the teachers actively involved my students in the class. One student was asked to come forward and tell the class about her college and this project. Others were included in small groups and actively helped students. Some teachers shared previous test scores from their roll books while explaining a current test. Many of my students were invited back to follow up on the observed activity.

Instead of waiting until near the end of a four-year degree program to get into the elementary classroom, students should observe excellent teaching techniques and role models in many disciplines during all four undergraduate years.

Patricia Piech, *Assistant Professor, Mathematics*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Formal Program Review: A Critical Imperative for Student Services

The concept of institutional effectiveness has engendered much concern in institutions of higher education, particularly in the community college. Of primary concern to community colleges is finding a way in which to make judgments objectively on the efficacy of educational programs. Today, educators want to know how to measure the quality of educational outcomes, instructional effectiveness, services rendered, and operating procedures. Currently, some colleges have begun to look seriously at measurements resulting from formal review.

During the past decade of dwindling resources, chief executive officers, local governing boards, state agencies, and regional accreditation agencies have become hard pressed to assure quality educational programs at a minimum cost to students and taxpayers. The onus of responsibility for developing a set of "proofs" that will demonstrate educational effectiveness and efficiency lies with personnel throughout the institution. One sure means of providing evaluative information on student services programs is via formal program review. However, one major challenge in student services program review is the identification of measures that will prevent the formal review process from being discounted by any constituencies.

Dimensions of Formal Review

The three major dimensions under scrutiny in formal program review are the quality of educational outcomes, the appropriateness of services determined by student need, and the accountability of institutional resources. The process of formal program review acts as a catalyst to strengthen and support a number of functions within the institution, such as budgeting, program planning, strategic planning, and other educational developments. Far too often, available data are not used within a systems framework. In some colleges where there is an abundance of data, there appears to be an overemphasis on data collection at the expense of data analysis. Therefore, a formal review process serves an essential function in contemporary educational systems.

Basic Purposes of Formal Review

The six basic purposes of program review are easily identified: (1) to establish a procedure that will systematically ensure quality programs; (2) to identify specific program deficiencies in order to modify services as necessary for improvement and productivity; (3) to assist service units in planning professional development programs and activities; (4) to provide an equitable method for institutional resource allocation based on identified need; (5) to maximize utilization of resources in support of service unit goals and objectives; (6) to synthesize and collate data from program review into a priority planning document.

Scope of Formal Review

The full scope of program review in student services encompasses every independent service unit. Typically, in community colleges the major divisions are Admissions and Records, Counseling, Financial Aid, Student Activities, Campus Police, and the College Bookstore. However, there are usually a number of smaller programs and service units contained in each division, such as Assessment and Research, Veterans' Affairs, Women's Center, Tutoring Services, International Students' Office, Intramural and Extramural Programs, Health Clinic, Disabled Student Services, and Job Placement. This array of programs and service units dictates an extended period of time for program review to be accomplished. Therefore, it is recommended that the review for student services be scheduled for either a three- or five-year cycle, depending on the institution's position regarding the intent of the evaluation.

Review Process

Critical to the success of the program review is the implementation of a process that mirrors, to a large extent, the evaluation of elements in the PPBS model. The review process should be accomplished in six to ten stages with corresponding timelines. The actual number of stages and timelines are dependent upon the administrative structure of the college. Four supervisory levels are assumed: service unit supervisor, division director, vice president of student services, and president. The number of levels will vary from one institution to the next, depending on reporting relationships.

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Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
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The core elements are the focal issues of the review process and should be studied both individually and in relation to the goals and objectives of the program. There must be checklists and data forms for every prescribed core element. There are five recommended core elements for the formal review in student services. The five critical core elements are Productivity Level, Program Need, Quality of Service, Staff Quality, and Cost Effectiveness. Supporting documentation relative to these core elements should be presented in a succinct and graphic manner. Service units are given an opportunity to include any additional information or data that are germane to the evaluative process. However, it is recommended that any additional data presented include performance measures for the service unit's goals and objectives, as well as a status report on its unit plan. It is also recommended that some effort be made to investigate other variables and intangibles specific to each unit: no amount of adherence to a formal process can replace an honest effort to identify and address deficiencies.

There are ten activity stages in the process. (1) A three-member Service Unit Program Review Committee is appointed by the unit supervisor. (2) The Committee begins gathering data to document the unit's performance on the five core elements. (3) The unit supervisor and director negotiate additional criteria. (4) The Committee requests any additional data through its supervisor. (5) The Committee completes the report and submits it to its supervisor. (6) The supervisor reviews the report, attaches a summary, and submits it to the director. (7) The director reviews the report, attaches an evaluation, and submits it to the vice president. (8) The vice president reviews the report, attaches an evaluation, and submits it to the Program Review Council. (9) The Program Review Council (consisting of representatives of the student body, professional staff, faculty, and administration) evaluates the report in consultation with the unit's supervisor and submits its findings to the president. (10) The president makes a final determination of the program's status (exemplary, satisfactory, conditional, or probationary) and reviews the findings and recommendations with the appropriate administrator.

Criticality of Formal Review

Many program planning decisions should be guided by information obtained from this kind of formal review process. The criticality of educational program review in years to come cannot be overstated. The reality of excellence in higher education can only be realized when institutional resources, human and otherwise, are developed into the proper blend. Excellence is not achieved solely by hiring competent faculty and administrators. Excellence in higher education can only be achieved by developing quality educational programs, by formally identifying and addressing program strengths and deficiencies, by promoting quality within each employee who serves students, by requiring the best effort of all who seek an education, and by assisting each student to discover and value his or her unique worth.

Earl L. Wright, *Vice President, Student Services*

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Take a Course/Drop a Course or "What Did You Learn in School Today?"

During the fall, the members of the English and Foreign Languages Department volunteered for a heavy dose of role reversal. Using a pool of administrative support time, the department head offered to give one course of release time to any member of the department who would take a course from another member. Half of the members jumped at the chance to become students in their colleagues' classes, a few more wanted to but could not because of other obligations, and there were some who became teachers of colleagues but not students. In our department, it is not surprising to find teachers ready to try something new. However, considering the autonomy of the classroom, it was gratifying to find this many willing to open themselves up as teachers and learners.

Probably one reason for the number of participants is the fact that, as a group, they are among the best teachers in the college. Although they give about three times as many C's as A's, which is opposite the general college ratio, they consistently score higher on student evaluations than the rest of the college. On the average, these teachers have been reading student compositions, or teaching language classes, for about 19 years. For the English teachers this has usually meant five courses each quarter with 25 students in each class. A course off, then, was an attractive offer; and taking a course from a colleague seemed just strange enough to be fun.

The rules for the project were simple. First, the course had to be taught in the department. After all, if we were going to share teaching and learning, why not share it with each other? Second, the teachers had to actually register for the course and stay in attendance until the end. Third, they could audit, but they had to complete, and submit for grading, all assignments. For this, they would be released from one teaching assignment.

The first hurdle was registration. According to the computer, English teachers do not meet the prerequisites for their courses. One of the composition teachers who was blocked from registering for a composition course said it was like having your credit card refused by Ivey's when there are 20 people in line behind you. She, like the other students, had to go to a special desk in the registration center, operated by another member of the department, and have the block electronically removed. Another instructor called from out of town, using our new telephone registration system. We found that it takes an average of four telephone calls to get the prerequisite block removed and complete the registration. Two who waited until final registration found the sections they wanted full and had to get a "green form" from the department head to take back to registration before being allowed into the class. Although all of us in the department assist students over these hurdles during registration, we had not anticipated having to do it ourselves. Consequently, we all learned something about embarrassment, frustration, and the shortest route from Sloan Building to Registration to Terrell Building.

The second major phase was entry into the class. For the teachers who found colleagues in their classes, there was predictable anxiety. But the teachers/students expressed equal anxiety in anticipation of having their writing and other work actually graded. This was the phase where humor became the driving force.

As students again, we all learned things about "studenting" that we had forgotten. The other students quickly accepted us as "one of them" and wanted to talk about assignments, tests, and to share grades. We experienced the dread of being called on and the tightening of the stomach as the teacher hands back tests or compositions. We also admit to glancing at the clock near the end of the period and praying the teacher would forget to give the next assignment. Teachers, we found out, rarely forget; and many of us became reacquainted with "midnight oil." Then, on a Monday morning about a third of the way through the term, several of us were standing around the coffee pot and realized we were discussing our weekend homework.

We also learned some important lessons about being "adult" students. On more than one occasion, a teacher/student shared his frustration at not having

enough time to really do the assignment well. One of the participants had what amounted to a shift change in some very important volunteer work she was doing in the afternoons and had to miss one day of class each week. The ones with families felt in a double bind. If they spent time with their families, they had to stay up late, alone to complete their work. If they got their work out of the way first, there was not enough time for family. One participant had a death in the family and almost had to drop the course. Several, naturally, missed days because of illness; and one missed because his car broke down. Community college teachers are very familiar with these excuses for missing class. But for most of us, these were not things that happened to us "back when we were in school." Consequently, we had come to view these as things that happen to "our" students. Now we know that these things are simply part of being an adult student today.

We also learned some things about our own classes. One teacher/student announced that she was going to ban yellow hi-liters from her classes forever. As a teacher she had always been pleased to see the hi-liters moving briskly as she asked probing questions about select passages in a story, taking this as a sign of attentiveness. In her role as a student, however, she learned that the students were hi-liteing instead of thinking. Everyone also began to look at syllabi, objectives, test questions and handouts from a different perspective. But the same is true for teaching styles. One person commented that this teacher was very punctual and that he had not realized how much he appreciated knowing that the class would start and end exactly on time. Another teacher/student appreciated his teacher's detailed organization of class time, while another liked her teacher's laid-back, open discussion technique.

This experience supports the idea that there is not one best teaching style. However, it is clear that we all need to continually examine our own to ensure that the one we are using is our best, if not the best. Perhaps most important, though, is that after working together longer than many families live together, we still learned a thing or two about each other. One teacher/student said about her teacher, "You know, all this time I thought she was easy. Now I think she's just good." Another said, "What he is doing is not what I would call English. But in Composition II, it works, and I think it is as important as what I do."

Almost all of the participants have asked for a chance to do this again, even though they all say they worked harder in the course they took than they would have teaching another course. Also, several of the ones who could not take a course want to take one in the future. Perhaps the greatest success in the experience is that *we had fun together*. We laughed at ourselves and at how easily we became like our students. We watched each other do what we do best: *Teach*. And we came away from the experience with, hopefully, a little more pride in ourselves and with a little more respect for each other. And all it takes is a little creative scheduling, a genuine respect for the people who teach, and a well-developed, ready sense of humor.

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New Students, New Semester: How to Remember Names and Faces

It's the first day of a new semester. In addition to the enthusiasm and optimism inherent in new beginnings, we as teachers also must confront a humbling task: how to learn the names and faces of the 20 to 40 unfamiliar students expectantly sitting before us.

And we must learn them quickly! In teaching, as in so many other fields, first impressions count for much. Before becoming teachers, all of us were students; we learned, if only subconsciously, that teachers who were slow in learning the names of their students tended to be uninspired and uninspiring. Although we certainly don't want our students to come to that harsh prejudgment of us, we are only human. Almost all of us find it difficult to put together names with the faces of so many new people in short order. The only individuals who seem to succeed, apart from professional memory trainers and sales representatives, are politicians.

Actually, there is a technique that can reliably be used to associate the names and faces of at least 75% of a typical first day class size of 20-40 new students. Even better, skillful use (i.e., the right amount of showmanship) of this technique can leave the impression that you have gotten to know almost all the students' names and faces by the start of the second class meeting.

STEP 1

Before coming to class, read the class roster several times. Focus on the last names and honorifics (Mr./Ms.). Memorize as many of them as you can.

By familiarizing ourselves with the names beforehand, we set up a kind of cognitive dissonance: If we know there is a Jones in the class, then we can concentrate on looking for Jones and remembering what he or she looks like. Under this procedure, paradoxically, students with unusual names become easier to remember. At this point there is no need to focus on the first, or given names. That just increases memory burden without yielding important initial benefits.

STEP 2

Start the class by introducing yourself and describing your background and expectations for the course. Conclude by saying that you would like to learn more about them, but there isn't time for everyone to be as longwinded as you've been. Hand out a "Student Expectations Survey" that asks for a name, address, and phone number(s), and includes an open-ended essay question about backgrounds and expectations. Allow students at least 15 minutes of writing time.

While the students are busy writing, take the opportunity to study their faces, clothing styles, posture, haircuts—anything, in short, that you can use to personalize the individual student. This visual information also sets up a cognitive dissonance: you'll certainly want to learn the name of the punk rocker with the purple hair. (The writing exercise is not only a chance to study the physiognomy of your students, but is also a way of taking attendance and gauging the overall intellectual potential and interests of your new class.)

STEP 3

In addition to absorbing the "tableau" of visual information presented by individual students, set up a mnemonic positional framework. For example, in a traditional classroom layout, call the first row on your left "A," the second row, "B," and so on. Similarly, call the first student in row "A," 1; the second, 2, etc. Modify this positional framework to fit various possible seating arrangements.

This framework is the heart of the technique presented. It relies on a curious fact of student sociobiology: students almost invariably return to the same seat they occupied during the first class, or in reasonable proximity. For example, students who choose to sit in the back of the room on the first day will almost never voluntarily change their seat to the front, and vice versa. Students who seem to prefer quick access to the door will sooner die than sit over by the windows, and vice versa.

STEP 4

Collect the student papers. Then, starting with position "A1," ask the students to introduce themselves and say a few words about themselves and their expectations for the course.

Again, this step, like the preceding ones, is not very different from ordinary classroom practice and sound group leadership. But it does set up the next step.

STEP 5

While listening as carefully as possible to what student "A1" is saying, find the name on the class roster and code "A1" next to it. (Obviously, if the student is not on the roster, write in the name and the code.) If you have memorized or nearly memorized the set of names, and have carefully studied the faces and appearances of your students, then the positional code will serve as the link or index between names and faces!

At first glance, Step 5 appears to be the result of cross-pollinating cognitive psychology with an electronic spreadsheet like LOTUS 1-2-3. Despite the resemblance, it isn't. You might be surprised to learn that the technique described above is virtually identical to the method used by ancient orators like Cicero to deliver complex orations without reading them to their audiences. (For more information on the techniques, consult any scholarly work on ancient oratory, particularly Frances Yates.)

STEP 6.

As soon as you can after class, read the "Student Expectations Surveys," covering up the name of the student. Attempt to remember the name, based on your recollections of what students said in class about themselves. Refer to your class roster and position-code the "Student Expectations Survey" so that you can "triangulate" if necessary.

This step provides additional reinforcement of the links between names, faces, and places.

STEP 7

Before the second class meeting, review the surnames and honorifics of the students on the class roster. Reread the "Surveys" and attempt to recollect names, faces, places.

By this point, the majority of the names, faces, and places should be almost committed to memory. And if during the second class you don't mind using the roster with positional codes as a kind of crib sheet—well, you can make it seem as though you know more names and faces than you really do. In fact, with the right amount of showmanship, you can appear to be a close relative of the "Amazing Kreskin."

Conclusions

Make no mistake: this technique does require a certain amount of work. Like anything else, practice makes it easier and easier to apply. But is it worth the effort?

There is no doubt, in my mind at least, that "the pain is worth the gain." In my own career as a student, I remember that my best teachers always seemed to take some extra effort to learn—and use—students' names as quickly as possible. The worst (i.e., graduate assistants in large undergraduate lecture courses) never bothered. Teachers cannot claim to be concerned about how well their students learn, if they themselves do not try as hard as they can to show they care about one of the most important possessions anyone can have in a mass civilization: a face and a name.

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Enhancing Your Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm. Think of the classes and workshops you have taken where the instructor was so excited about being there, where his/her energy for the material and for learning was so strong that the whole class was carried to another level. Remember the courses you have taken where the instructor's enthusiasm was so great that you couldn't help but become involved in the subject matter and in the classroom experience. Perhaps we need to approach stimulating student interest by exploring the enthusiasm we bring to the classroom.

Are there steps we can take to enhance our enthusiasm and thereby create exciting learning experiences for our students? I surveyed the more than 100 full- and part-time faculty members at Santa Fe Community College, where I am an instructor, to find out how they develop their enthusiasm. The survey (43 faculty members responded to the written survey) revealed 10 different approaches which we can utilize to explore and expand the joy and excitement we bring to our courses. I have grouped the 10 approaches (with some of the instructors' comments) into three categories: those approaches that focus on a) the instructor-student relationship, b) the instructor's relationship to the subject matter, and c) the instructor's classroom teaching style.

A. APPROACHES FOCUSING ON THE INSTRUCTOR-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP.

1. **Paying attention to the joy of watching students learn**. Several instructors expressed how excited they felt "witnessing the glow in students' eyes when they realize that they've just learned something important." We can use the joy of watching "when the light bulb clicks on" in a student's mind as a motivation for becoming better teachers. The excitement that students experience as they learn can inspire excitement within ourselves and motivate us to actively seek out new ways of stimulating student learning.
2. **Developing a personal relationship with students**. By getting to know students and by sharing with students, many instructors create a "personal" bond that motivates them in the classroom. The personal relationship that is developed by having students share their backgrounds with the class, by calling on students by name, and by "working one-on-one with students having trouble," personalizes our experience of teaching. As teachers, we are more stimulated and more excited about teaching when we know the people in our classes.
3. **Appreciating the important role we play in our students' lives.** As teachers, we significantly influence the lives of our students. Simply by our personality and our manner, we positively and/or negatively influence our students' self-images and their feelings about the subject matter and learning. By reminding ourselves of the instructors in our past who helped turn us off to a particular subject and remembering those who helped us open doors in our minds, we are motivated to more positively and effectively present ourselves and the subject matter.

B. APPROACHES FOCUSING ON THE INSTRUCTOR'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE SUBJECT MATTER.

1. **Loving our subject matter**. Several instructors spoke of how their enthusiasm sprang from "falling in love" with their subject matter. Deep feelings for our field of expertise, a keen interest in "new discoveries or ideas," and "excitement" for our professions are strong motivators. By loving what we teach, we more profoundly inspire our students.
2. **Teaching new and/or a variety of courses**. Another technique for enhancing the enthusiasm we bring to the classroom is by "teaching a variety of subjects." For example, by volunteering to teach something we've never taught before, we experience an awareness of the challenges that our students face on a daily basis. Teaching a variety of courses can help us keep that certain edge of vitality, of freshness to our presentations.
3. **Appreciating the importance of what we teach to our students' lives**. We can enhance our enthusiasm by keeping in mind the "critically important" role the subject matter will play in the lives of our students. Whether it is teaching

people basic reading skills necessary for survival in today's world, teaching skills that are vital to running a business, or teaching nursing skills that will be critical to the survival of patients, we can come to class excited about the pivotal role that we and the content we teach can play in our students' lives.

C. APPROACHES FOCUSING ON THE INSTRUCTOR'S CLASSROOM TEACHING STYLE.

1. **Teaching in a way that involves us in the course.** By "walking around the room, getting closer to students," by presenting the material in a way that "requires a response, not just absorption," by continuously adjusting our teaching style based on the responses given by students, we enhance our active involvement in the classroom and thereby enhance our enthusiasm for the teaching experience. The employment of such teaching styles as playing "devil's advocate," going over the homework together with students, sharing the responsibility with students for covering new material, questioning students, and so on, make the classroom a stimulating learning environment for ourselves as teachers.
2. **Making the material real to our students and helping students learn for themselves.** By connecting the "course material, in some way, to an aspect of their (the students) own experience," students and the instructor become more excited about the subject matter. A great deal of enthusiasm is generated by designing our courses to be "hands-on sessions, as close to real life as possible." Several instructors, as well, wrote of the excitement they derived from helping students be responsible for "their own learning," incorporate the material "in their own way," and discover the "answer on their own." We can be invigorated then by helping our students apply the subject matter to their lives and learn for themselves.
3. **Using humor in the classroom.** Humor can be used to enliven the classroom experience, to make it fun. Laughing with students at life and ourselves eases tension, raises the energy of the class, and helps students perceive us as more human and accessible. Humor has the added benefit of making material easier for students to remember.
4. **Challenging ourselves to find the best teaching style for each situation.** We can also generate a great deal of enthusiasm by accepting the challenge of finding the most effective teaching style for each situation. By seeing each class session as "an entirely new experience," we open to a continuously unfolding and exciting discovery process. For each group of students and each particular topic covered, we can actively explore the learning format that will best facilitate student understanding and integration of the material.

This survey of faculty members at Santa Fe Community College revealed a broad diversity of approaches we can use to explore and enhance our enthusiasm. By applying these approaches, we encourage exciting, productive learning experiences for our students. Instructor enthusiasm is a powerful teaching tool. It not only enhances our own experience of teaching; but more important, it stimulates interest in our students.

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the advertising period.

Prior to the formal screening, the committee did a "holistic" application screening where they were presented with three dummy applications and directed to screen as though these forms and the candidates they represented were real. We discussed our individual screening line-by-line to compare scores and ensure the screening device was adequate for the task. This process allowed us a better understanding of how we were screening individual qualifications and saved later debate over the qualifications of actual candidates. The Human Resources staff pre-screened applications for the minimum qualifications. I reviewed those screened out, as did anyone on the committee who chose to do so.

After application screening, each committee member submitted no more than 15 names as possible interview candidates. One candidate was endorsed by all 13 members, several others received two or fewer endorsements; many received from 1-12. Each member had the opportunity to defend any candidate chosen. Ultimately, we agreed to interview those candidates having eight or more endorsements. During the scheduling time, questions were finalized and a holistic interview held with the chief instructional officer of a neighboring campus. We used this as a check on our questions for quality of content and to eliminate any ambiguities not readily apparent in the process. We were also able to hear a set of answers from a person working successfully in a position comparable to the one we hoped to fill.

Each candidate received by mail a packet of material describing the college and the district. Prior to the interview each was given a tour of the campus and an opportunity to meet staff. A copy of the questions was provided for reference during the interview. Adequate time was allowed for complete answers and for follow-up questions from the committee. Following the oral interview each candidate was required to respond in writing to a final question within a designated time. These essays became part of the interview evaluation.

Extensive reference checking followed the interviews. We checked official references, and each committee member assumed the responsibility for talking with his or her counterpart at the current and previous places of employment. For example, our Business Manager talked to other chief financial officers while I spoke with library directors. In the case of our in-house candidate, we had the unique opportunity to interview ourselves! Seriously, critical facts, pro and con, emerged from these conversations which were consistent from person to person and within affirmative action guidelines.

The committee then met to recommend finalists for the President's consideration. The finalists were invited back to campus to meet with the President, the Executive Administration, the Faculty Senate, and representatives of other campus groups; a site visit by the President and the search committee chair followed. At the site visit, we met with the College President, the Academic Senate President, academic deans, and other staff conversant with the candidate's qualifications. As chair, I made a recommendation to the President following the site visit. He then weighed the recommendations and his own impressions and decided on his recommendation to the board.

Trust, hard work, and confidentiality were the hallmarks of this process, as was the work of an outstanding support staff. We on the committee agreed to recommend no one with whom we could not live. When only two finalists were recommended, the President accepted our judgment. We in turn allowed him to make the final recommendation based on the factors previously listed.

Much has been written about the mechanics and philosophy of academic searches. Our search worked well, primarily because the members of this committee operated as a team and kept institutional needs ahead of departmental considerations. Discussions were frequently spirited and, at times, emotional. A high level of candor evolved and with it an equally high level of trust. Over time the group stopped operating as a collection of individuals and began to work as a team. In our deliberations, issues were brought out which, in previous searches, may only have been discussed by one or two members rather than by the entire committee. We were able to vent our concerns and frustrations to each other and resolve them as a group. Time invested in the planning and organizational stages saved an infinite amount of grumbling and second-guessing in the later stages of the process. Confidentiality was a by-word from the beginning, and institutionally the result has proved very successful.

Judy J. Cater, Media Services Librarian

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Personally Speaking: Students Voicing Their Opinions

The freshman year experience is an important part of the total college program designed to provide opportunities for social as well as interpersonal growth and development. STD 100-Orientation is a one-credit, 16-week course that is required for the full-time student who seeks to earn a degree or certificate. Each class meets for one session a week. Objectives of the course are for students to become aware of the various college services available, provide opportunities for adjustment to and survival in college, improve study habits, clarify educational and vocational goals, increase their personal understanding, and have them accept the responsibility for learning. Aside from class attendance, participation in out-of-class workshops, seminars, or presentations is also required. Structured exercises to meet the objective of increasing personal understanding—such as, values clarification—are made available during the sessions.

Another activity that sets ground rules, but is basically free-flowing, is "Personally Speaking (PS)"—a series of sessions devoted to the discussion of topics relevant to students. Two class sessions into the semester, students are requested to list topics of interest that they would like to discuss. Imaginations may run wild at this point because there is no limit to the number of suggestions a student can submit. For example, my class of 24 students submitted a total of 36 topics ranging from devil worship to snake-handling, churches to television evangelists.

After this initial compilation, the list is read to the class. The students are required to write down only *one* topic they feel they would like to talk about. From this, the list is narrowed to 12 topics or so because similar choices are categorized as a single item. Then what? The final listing is presented to the class and rank-ordered. Some time during the next 14 weeks could be scheduled for PS (assuming part of the first two sessions were devoted to compiling the list).

What would the initial structure be like? Prior to the beginning of PS, the instructor mentions that there are no right or wrong answers—also, that each student's comments, however ludicrous or far-fetched, need to be respected. In other words, students are not to make fun of others' statements. And, the instructor may intercede to enforce these rules of order. [There are instances in which the discussants become very emotional. For example, one issue—gender equity in work—rapidly escalated into "women who join the military can only serve in a support capacity because they can't do half the physical work that men can do." One of the students had completed basic training for the marines, and she told the group that the top recruit to graduate was a woman! You can imagine the response of a former marine who voiced the first statement. Calm and rational thinking prevailed, however. Needless to say, the students voiced their opinions; and it was one session that neither I nor they will ever forget.] At times, the instructor needs to prod students by asking questions that are relevant to the topic. If the issue is "devil worship," you may ask if it exists in the various high schools that students attended or if they saw the Geraldo Rivera special. Aside from acting as enforcer, the instructor encourages participation and feedback.

Early in the semester the group may not be comfortable enough to start speaking out in PS sessions. Therefore, later in the semester may be ideal because an element of familiarity, trust, and support has evolved. Class composition is a plus as the older, more mature students provide opinions obtained from life experiences. Discretion for the scheduling of PS is a combination of instinct and interest. Ask the students when they would like to have a PS session.

What are the outcomes? Students feel more confident speaking their minds in front of a group of people, and the sessions create a learning climate that is primarily student-initiated. For first-year students, this reinforces the attitude that learning is the responsibility of the individual and that ideas of other people are respected in the work world.

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Teaching—What a Joke!
Maintaining a Sense of Humor in the Learning Process

People who display a sense of humor are healthier, more fun to be around, and live longer than those who do not. It is easy for an educator caught up in the seriousness of the job to accidentally create a humorless environment. Many of us believe that a humorless environment is a humanless environment. Smiling or laughing, especially at one's own folly, is a uniquely human characteristic.

I propose that not only can learning be more fun with the use of humor, but that learning is actually enhanced. Encouraging students to display their sense of humor is important. Humor, being creative in nature, tends to be left-brained—whereas much subject matter, especially in business, mathematics, and science, tends to be right-brained. Research has shown that learning is enhanced when left- and right-brained activities are co-mingled. It appears that *what one jokes about, one tends to remember*! For example, students should be encouraged to tell funny stories that are related to the subject at hand.

I only know two jokes about accounting—a particularly humorless discipline. One is that in determining the value to place on your inventory, you may use the LIFO (last-in first-out method), FIFO (first-in, first-out method) or FISH (first-in still-there method). Buyers may not particularly like this joke! The other is about the accountant who looked in his bottom drawer a half dozen times a day for 25 years. After he retired his fellow employees rushed to the drawer, which he always kept locked, curiously waiting to see what he looked at so frequently. They got the key, opened the drawer, and on the bottom of the empty drawer was taped a sign which read "Debits left, Credits right."

This joke should be told at an appropriate time. Students who have been introduced to basic debit/credit theory and are struggling with the concept of the meaning of the words will benefit from this joke and will probably always remember "debit left, credit right."

It is important to make it all right to make a mistake—to have little failures—in a classroom setting. If students can feel comfortable laughing at their own shortcomings, the whole atmosphere can improve. A friendly smile and an atmosphere where a student can "simply try again" is an improvement over a punitive environment based on fear or threats.

Why we continue to struggle to teach and students continue to struggle to learn is a question we ask ourselves from time to time. It reminds me of the joke about the guy who went to the psychiatrist and said that he had a brother who thinks he is a chicken. The psychiatrist said to bring him in right away. The guy said, "Well, I would, but we need the eggs."

Speaking of eggs, did you hear about the chicken who....

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Critical Thinking and Collaborative Learning

While most experts agree that critical thinking can and should be taught, many disagree with how it is being taught. Those who disagree contend that teachers are teaching students to think critically as individuals, while most problem solving in everyday life occurs in groups. Experts point out that individuals who problem-solve quite well individually perform abysmally in group situations, and that the sum of group thought is usually less than the sum of individual thought—a phenomenon referred to as "groupthink." Also, in recent years employers have begun to call attention to the deficit in group problem solving skills which they encounter in their college-trained employees. The teaching of critical thinking is not enough. Educators must also discover ways to teach meaningful critical thinking skills. One method is the collaborative or group learning method.

Through careful design of the classroom setting, specific instruction in the evaluative method, and precise structuring of assignments, students can solve pertinent problems which require the development and use of critical thinking skills. At the same time, students will benefit from experience in collaboration. Practical activities which require students to evaluate a problem, by establishing group criteria and applying those criteria to problems, will foster the growth of collaborative critical thinking abilities in students.

One successful method of organizing such an activity includes three major steps. The first step includes establishing groups and individual responsibilities within groups. The instructor may select groups in a variety of ways (however, I have found that odd-numbered groups of not more than five per group work well). Each group, then, can select a group leader, a presenter, and a secretary. The entire group is responsible for determining the materials the secretary will include in the group report. The group leader's responsibilities include ensuring that all members contribute, organizing the final report, and leading the group discussion. The presenter is responsible for the oral delivery of the final group report to the class. The secretary is responsible for compiling, from the notes of the group members, the final report under the direction of the group leader and members. All group members including leaders, presenters, and secretaries are responsible for researching, note taking, setting criteria, and evaluating the problem.

Once students understand their group roles, the instructor can make the assignment. Students should have completed an appropriate reading assignment that will force them to formulate criteria by which they will evaluate a problem. Instruct students to keep a careful record of these criteria, as well as the application of specific elements of the problem. Explain that students must make and justify judgments. Tell students that their job is to determine whether particular outcomes are good or bad, and why they are one or the other. To keep the activity within a manageable time frame, allot a specific amount of time for each task. Inform students of the time limits; i.e., they have 15 minutes for research, ten minutes for compilation, etc. After students are aware that they have a schedule for solving the problem, describe the problem. The following problems, taken from different disciplines, have been used successfully by four FCCJ instructors:

> **European History**: What caused the French Revolution? What were the gains and losses to each segment of society? Do the gains outweigh the losses? Do the gains justify the violence that accompanied the Revolution? Would it have been desirable to have prevented the Revolution? If so, how could it have been prevented? Compare the social, economic, political, and ecclesiastical positions of each estate at the beginning with the end of the Revolution. Each group will establish a unique criterion for evaluating the conditions of the estates.
>
> Anita Morris, History

> **Economics**: One of the most pressing problems facing the government is the federal budget deficit. There are many proposed solutions to the problem. During

the process of reading/researching, students will analyze the several aspects of the proposed solutions. Why did the deficit occur? Is a budget deficit ever "a good thing" for a country? Why? Why not? Is the deficit best solved by raising taxes or curtailing government spending? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Which solution do you think is the most successful? Why or why not?

Elizabeth Otto, Economics

Political Science: The United States recognizes the vast expansion and modernization of the Soviet military and realizes the danger to Western/U.S. interests; however, the Soviet leadership is advocating military reductions and appears to seek a warming of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. Considering the current budget deficit crunch, should a president advocate increases in military expenditures to counter the threat as a safety measure or should he gamble that the political overtures of the USSR are genuine and likely to be long term, even after the present Soviet leader has departed from politics?

Edward Fleming, Political Science

Psychology: In Europe, a woman was near death from cancer. One drug might save her, a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The druggist was charging $2000, ten times what the drug cost him to make. The sick women's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow money; but he could gather only about half of the drug's cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell the drug for less money or to let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No." The husband got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should the husband have done that? Why or why not? (Rest, 1968)

Robert Rainey, Psychology

Having made the assignment clear, the instructor may start the groups. A suggested schedule for group work is 15 minutes for research, 10 for compilation of data, 40 for presentations and discussion, and 10 for closure. Students may use the closure period to comment on material presented by other groups or for revised summary. It is also the time the instructor will use to summarize the work of groups. The instructor must keep the students moving from one part of the activity to the next. If students are left to manage time on their own, they frequently are unable to move ahead.

The collaborative/critical thinking learning method is time-consuming but rewarding. Because it is time-consuming, it may be appropriate only infrequently. Nevertheless, this instructor has found this method to be an excellent one for introducing specific units of study. However, when students are accomplishing memory-level learning independently, this method should be the "main course." Not only does it develop the highest level of learning ability but it encourages students to use that ability in the most practical way—cooperatively.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Using Combined Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Visual Learning Methods in the Auto Shop

"Crayons! Crayons? Son, why are you taking crayons to college?"

"I'm using them in my auto mechanics class, Dad. The teacher has us color the hydraulic diagrams for our automatic transmissions."

I teach auto mechanics to community college students. Their ages range from 18 to 65 years. They exhibit a wide variety of learning methods. Some are kinesthetic learners who learn best by touching. Others are auditory learners who learn best via listening. (All of us use all three methods, but we normally use one method more than the others.) Most of my students are visual and/or kinesthetic learners. Very few are auditory learners. Yet auditory learning skills are expected for the lecture portion of class. I have found a way to combine all three major learning methods into one. I still use an auditory lecture, but I supplement it with visual and kinesthetic methods at the same time.

Automatic transmissions have hydraulic circuits that are used to control when the transmission shifts gears. In each gear different passageways are filled with oil. When students first see the complete factory hydraulic schematic of a production transmission, they are overwhelmed. They can't see the individual components because of the overall complexity. Therefore, I created a beginning generic hydraulic schematic of the transmission gears. There are eight or more different patterns for them to learn. It would be very time-consuming to make a unique drawing for each gear of each transmission, so I use a computer to make a basic pattern. At first I thought that I would have to master computer graphics to create this pattern. But after experimentation I found that a simple word processing program, rather than complex graphics, was all I needed. The time-consuming part is creating the original generic form. The easy part is to copy the basic form using the computer and then to modify just those parts that are different in each gear. As I teach each new transmission, all I do is modify the generic form and include the different features of the current transmission, rather than create a new computer form.

I also create a schematic diagram that identifies the physical location of the various clutches and bands controlled by the hydraulic system. As well, these diagrams are computer files for easy manipulation. For both types of schematics I use the same color codes for the bands and clutches. That way the student can see that the red-colored pressure in the hydraulic schematic is responsible for applying the red-colored clutch in the physical location schematic.

In lecture class I use these two forms as the organizing format for my lecture on transmissions. I have the students sit around the table at the front of the room while I lecture. As I lecture, I have them color the various hydraulic circuits that I am explaining. I use one color for mainline pressure and others for throttle pressure and governor pressure. The students are all close at hand, so I can easily use the form that I am also coloring to show them how the circuits function. Since I use a different form for each gear, the student can see what is happening—as the transmission shifts gears—by flipping rapidly from chart to chart. The forms can also be used to make overhead projector transparencies (via the copying machine).

I have found that student comprehension of basic automatic transmission hydraulic theory has increased since I have begun using this combined auditory, visual, and kinesthetic method of teaching. I know this because I also use the charts on my tests. One part of the test is to color a duplicate of one of the pages that we colored in class. Then students can use their diagram to help answer the short essay question about the operation of the hydraulic system as it shifts from gear to gear. Students at first joke about bringing crayons to college, but soon they are proud of their sketches!

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THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

Using the Computer to Recruit Auto Students

At Kankakee Community College the instructor is the person primarily responsible for recruitment, and career center schools are the main source of new students. I have tried several methods of getting students' attention when I visit with them in recruiting sessions that can last as long as two hours. I knew that I needed to impress students with Kankakee Community College and to talk about the advantages of attending my college. This year I tried what has proven to be a very successful approach. What I discovered is that if you *give them something to do* while you are talking, they will more likely give you their attention.

First, I have students complete a form on which they list their name, address, and presumed college major; then they check boxes to request additional information that they might want about my college. This form is not ordinary! Between the major sections of the form are statements about my college—such as, "Did you know that the Auto Mechanics certificate program takes only eight months to complete?" I intend that students, in completing the form, get the first of several presentations about what I want them to know about my auto program. The entire process is a "soft sell." After they fill out the survey form, I give them a sheet that says, "Help Wanted: Auto Mechanic. Must be able to fix PFI, TBI, and DIS." Following the "ad," I list some of the advantages of my program—such as, the cost. Many times the students will ask what PFI, TBI, and DIS mean. This lack of definition on the ad sheet is deliberate because it sparks questions and discussion about the program. I tell them that DIS stands for distributorless ignition system, which is a computer-controlled system with no moving parts, other than two magnets, that has taken the place of the old mechanical distributor. TBI is throttle body fuel injection, and PFI is port fuel injection. Once those questions are answered, I tell them that autos are computers with tires on them and that I will teach them a basic computer skill that they will be able to use when they own their own businesses (most incoming college freshmen dream of owning their own businesses someday).

Then I ask if anyone has prior computer experience. (The high school students to whom I speak fall into two categories: the minority is computer literate; the majority has never touched a computer. The novelty of learning a little about computers makes this activity particularly exciting.) Those who do have prior experience are designated as the typists. The students are divided into equal-sized groups, using as many personal computers as the high school can spare. Each team is given a printed sheet with the words and formulas that are to be entered into each cell of the spreadsheet—developed for my Computerized Shop Management class. It is the first that the students study. It will calculate take-home pay (by entering the amount paid per hour), the number of hours worked, and the federal and state tax rates expressed as percentages. I talk them through the entire spreadsheet, one step at a time. Then they get to play "what if" with the form. I have them give themselves a raise. I have them increase the tax rates. They can instantly see what would happen to their checks if these changes were made. (Many express surprise that so much money is being withheld as taxes!)

Depending upon the time available, I have them use another spreadsheet to calculate a customer's bill. It will perform a financial analysis of the profitability of that bill—calculating the cost of rent, insurance, utilities, etc.

When I have more time, I use a program that simulates an engine that continually breaks down. The object of this program is to drive the car, then diagnose and fix the failures while the program keeps track of the amount of money spent. (I use this program in my shop; and many students discover, in using that program, that they need more study. A variation within this program is a series of five cars that have increasing numbers of problems. The object is to fix all of the problems with the least expenditure of time and money.)

The students have fun with these exercises. The computer is the "hook" to get their interest, and then I can promote my program.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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O Robin! My Captain!

Your children have been out of school and underfoot for less than a month and already you are counting the days—minutes, you say?—until school regathers them to its bosom in blessed September. For now, enroll then for two hours in Welton Academy. You, too, might as well matriculate for the pleasure of studying poetry with John Keating.

Keating, played with restrained perfection by Robin Williams (there is no "Goooooooooooood Morning Vermont!"), is the intense but deft English teacher whose spirit drives "Dead Poets Society." This movie may wean a few adolescents away from addiction to the merely visual. It can spark appreciation of the raptures—that is not too strong a word—they can receive from words.

The title itself speaks well of the movie's makers. Notice, no roman numeral. In this summer of sequels (coming soon, "Ghostbusters Go Star Trekking Through a Nightmare on Elm Street with Indiana Jones, Part XIV") this is an original idea. The title is quirky and probably off-putting to the lowing bovine herd of people who are put off by anything odd. Poets? Today, slam-bang mindless action seems required to arrest the attention of the jaded public with its flickering five-second attention span. This movie promises only—only!—the pleasure of words.

A prep-school teacher as hero? Keating is heroic, but not in the banal manner of the whip-cracking, death-defying archaeologist Jones. Keating's heroism is in his discipline, the purity of his devotion to his vocation. It is, for him, literally a *vocatio*, a calling. Language spoken by dead poets calls him. He will summon from some sons of the upper class a sense of the wonderful wildness of life.

Wildness is severely suppressed at staid Welton in rural Vermont in 1959. But Keating enkindles seven students who revive a secret society, the Dead Poets. It meets after midnight, against school rules, in a cave, where poetry is read after an invocation by Thoreau: "I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life." When they prance through the forest fog toward the cave they resemble druids in duffel coats. Youth usually has its private language. The seven boys experience from poetry a bonding and delight that today's youth derive from rock music and the pathetic verbal slouching of rap.

Robin Williams's favorite poet is e.e. cummings. That figures. Or: tHa)t fi!Gu s. cummings, whose exuber-

e

r

ance was too protean for orthodox typography, said

the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls
are unbeautiful and have comfortable minds.

Williams's Keating begins refurbishing his pupils' souls by telling them they are mortal, "food for worms, lads!...*Carpe Diem*, lads." The boys declaim lines from Whitman while kicking soccer balls. Keating's credo is Whitman's, "...the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse."

A powerful teacher like Keating may at times teeter on the brink of intellectual bullying, making individuality mandatory. However, Williams rightly describes Keating as a "catalyst" for the boys, and Keating periodically recedes from the story. This is the movie's point. Keating is always there because a good teacher is a benevolent contagion, an infectious spirit, an emulable stance toward life. That is why it is said good teachers enjoy a kind of immortality: their influence never stops radiating.

The school (actually, St. Andrew's in Delaware) has an N. C. Wyeth mural. On one side, boys surround a figure of Liberty; on the other, industrialists surround a drafting table. The mural serenely suggests the easy compatibility of liberty and practicality, the free man as pragmatist. The movie sees a shadow over life, a tension between the poetic and practical impulses. Both are natural and dignified. What is perennially problematic is accommodating individuality and social ambition.

Adolescent awakening: The story is set on the eve of the 1960s, so it may seem quaint that Keating must toil to overcome student passivity. Actually, few '60s students fit the '60s stereotypes. Furthermore, this story of adolescent awakening is both of the late '50s time, and timeless. Although the 1950s are called years of 'conformity,' the principal conformity was that of the chorus decrying it. The characterization of the Eisenhower years as "the bland leading the bland" does no justice to the intellectual ferment and literary vigor.

David Riesman's "The Lonely Crowd" (1950), C. Wright Mills's "White Collar" (1951), Sloan Wilson's "The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit" (1955) and William Whyte's "The Organization Man" (1956) anticipated a 1960s anxiety, the suffocation of individuality by social structures and pressures. In "Dead Poets Society" these pressures are incarnate in a thin-lipped father practicing parental fascism and hounding his son to Hell and Harvard Medical School.

There was in the '50s an unhealthy concern with producing "well-adjusted" (to what?) adolescents so "well-rounded" they had no edges. Keating is an admirable sort of '50s figure, an intellectual eager to carve edges or prevent them from being abraded by the rasp of a dull school. However, he is not a harbinger of the 1960s, not a politicized academic. His politics (and, for all I know, Robin Williams's) may be part Nietzsche, part Pogo. The power of his personality is in the purity of his conviction that literature, the high mountain pass leading to passionate understanding, is so large and absorbing it leaves no time for lesser, supposedly more "relevant" (to what?) matters.

Hollywood has an almost unconquerable itch for moral black and white, and this movie has a two-hanky ending that manipulates emotions too mechanically. But at the core of the movie is a flinty, unsentimental message: the wildness of life can be dangerously wild. Creativity can have painful costs that must be paid in the coin of personal, family, and social stresses.

Speaking of stress, while waiting for September do note that Keating tells the boys they may address him either as Mr. Keating or O Captain! my Captain! (from Whitman's poem about Lincoln's death). This summer, answer your children only when so addressed. It will work wonders for your morale, the tone of your household, and the caliber of the long days until Labor Day.

George F. Will, *Columnist*

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There's No Such Thing as Too Many Cooks in the Classroom

After months of listening to my vague complaints of not being completely satisfied with teaching writing, despite my love of both teaching and writing, a close friend of mine and former composition teacher herself summed up all my stewing in one apt analogy. "Of course you're unhappy with what you're doing," she let fly one day. "It's just like putting on one big meal after another: All you do is prepare, prepare, prepare, and then clean up, clean up, clean up. You're left with almost no time or energy to enjoy the meal in between."

Sound familiar? It sure did to me! I prepared classes into minutiae, evaluated papers into eternity, and in between I met with classes full of students who didn't seem nearly grateful enough for all my hard work and concern. It was like a perpetual Thanksgiving dinner: It just looked effortless to my students because I slaved long and hard under a hot desk lamp to make it look that way.

This realization, though heartening because of the clarity it produced on one level, was confusing on another level. Maybe I was guilty of overkill in my attempts to be the best teacher possible, but I couldn't believe the alternative was to surrender to what I looked upon as the fast-food purveyors of teaching: the burned-out, the lazy, the cynical, and the less-than-capable who somehow manage to survive in every discipline. Yet learning to give less to my teaching sounded like the only possible response to overkill, which in turn sounded suspiciously like learning to serve up junk food. The fact that the friend who flashed this realization before my eyes had given up teaching completely was not lost on me either; but she was working at least as long and hard in her present career, so conclusions weren't easily drawn.

Searching through scraps of memory and experience from my years as student as well as teacher brought me back to the same point again and again: Very good teaching is inseparable from very hard work. Try as I might, I couldn't find the line between hard work and overkill, so I was about to acquiesce to the idea of slaving away alone in a hot educational kitchen the rest of my life and being vaguely dissatisfied in the name of duty and honor when I remembered a vital point about my friend who made the analogy in the first place. Although she's a great cook, she never does the cleanup after the meals she prepares. And that may be the key to her continuing love affair with cooking through all these years.

In other words, I was finally struck by what may have been obvious to the non-Thanksgiving-dinner-producing people of the world all along: Not all hard work is alike. There is a difference between miserable hard work (e.g., overkill) and positive hard work (what I now, at times, become exuberant enough about to think of as joyful hard work). The implications of this difference can have an effect on both our approaches to and satisfaction with teaching.

Miserable hard work is doing it all ourselves but receiving very little acknowledgement for our efforts because these efforts are, paradoxically, both hidden and selfish: We are the ones who shop for the ideas, buy those that we believe are appropriate, prepare the ideas in the way we find most interesting, feed them to our students, and then evaluate their digestion of the ideas presented. So we prepare, prepare, prepare, and then we clean up, clean up, clean up—over and over again. This approach does get the turkey on the table, but it rarely leaves students or teacher satisfied. What is there to be satisfied about? We as teachers have claimed full responsibility for the success of the class and so become like anxious hosts, hoping above all else to avoid any embarrassing social blunders. The students are denied any part of the creation of the class or even their own ideas, so naturally they have no strong feelings either way about the class, as long as they can figure out what is expected of them and play along for a passing grade. Satisfaction, in the end, is choked out of the class for all of us.

How, then, does positive hard work differ from miserable hard work? I'm sure the true answer is in ways we'll never stop discovering—since variations on the theme "take risks together and learn together" are limitless. One element basic to all positive hard work in teaching seems to be this willingness not only to encourage students to take risks in learning but to take risks ourselves. From this basis, some of the steps I'm

beginning to take in my own teaching are the following:

— I try to start by believing that every person in the room—regardless of the level of the class—has something valid to say that is worth his or her time to learn to say in writing.
— I focus my class on writing first and last because it is a writing class. I avoid the seemingly safer approaches of grammar for grammar's sake or exercises to fill the hours. These approaches vest me again with all the responsibility (I have all the right answers!) while stealing writing and thinking time from the class.
— I encourage collaboration in writing and at times teach effective methods of collaboration. I'm aware of strong opposition to collaborative writing by teachers who fear their students will never become independent writers. But I have seen dramatic gains in writing skill and confidence by students encouraged to learn from one another's strengths. Peter Elbow makes a wonderful point about collaborative writing:

> If we help them use collaboration to make their own papers better than they could make them without help . . . they will have the feel for a good paper. They will have the taste of it in their mouths. That feel or taste may be the biggest aid of all in the ensuing year when it comes to learning to do it alone.

— I'm learning to listen and respond to ideas I've never thought of before, which arise from students forced to come up with their own ideas. This forces me, also, to take the risk of thinking on my feet.
— I'm also learning to endure blank spots and silences, rather than filling them myself. This allows students to learn about silence, about its being good at times and embarrassingly revealing, like nakedness, at other times.
— I try consciously to push aside cynicism, which rubs off on students like newspaper ink on fingers and leaves them too tarnished to accept all the fresh ideas that could be available to them.
— In place of cynicism, I try to cultivate and convey an honest appreciation of my subject and a strong sense of purpose. I found this to be impossible when I was doing no writing of my own.

I realize that these are not concrete suggestions for specific action, as we would demand from our students. But maybe every now and then we need to stop and think hard about why we do what we do and let the how develop on its own. I'm just beginning to discover how this more positive approach can affect my teaching and my students' learning. One overall suggestion I can offer is to try each semester to give students something you can all be thankful for: Teach them to prepare their own feasts.

Elbow, Peter. "A Note About Collaboration." Teachers & Writers Magazine 19.4 (1988): 4.

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Podium: A Forum of Inquiry

In 1983, the Brookdale Center for Educational Research was established to promote educational research at the community college. The mission of the center was to recognize the ongoing research, to encourage new research, and to publicize these projects in the college and in the community. Research was broadly defined to exceed the traditional structures established in most institutions to include classroom research, grant proposals, and special projects.

One of the original goals of the center was to develop a journal that would publish the unique type of research conducted at the community college level. It would represent the efforts of the total college community (faculty, staff, students) who contribute to the success of the overall educational program.

In the fall of 1985, with a grant from the New Jersey Department of Higher Education, Podium began to be a reality. It took about two years for the first issue to get off the ground. Each successive issue, now supported by the college, is published annually. It has color and illustrations, and its lively format is accessible to both professional and lay audiences.

Subjects in Podium are as diverse as the college community. Recent issues feature articles on the "Vanishing Towns of the Pinelands," "The Use of Humor in Teaching," and "Latchkey Children." Viewpoints on challenging teaching methodologies include articles on "Discovery Through Writing," "Risky Business," and "New Computer-Aided Indexes." Research involving statistical data is represented by articles on "The Reverse Transfer Student," "The Unknown States," and "Who Are the Math Achievers?" Each issue has interviews with faculty, authors, musicians, and/or artists.

The journal is edited by a writing faculty member who solicits manuscripts from the college community. The role of the editor is to encourage and assist fledgling authors to risk putting their ideas and experiences on paper.

Podium has been enthusiastically received at the college. Several articles have been republished in other journals. Copies have been circulated at college conferences, workshops, and seminars in a variety of disciplines. It has become a model for other colleges. The focus is so disparate that everyone seems to find something to read and discuss.

Frank Paoni, *Coordinator, Center for Educational Research*
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Teaching by Storytelling

While one purpose of storytelling is entertainment, the story is not a trivial device intended only for amusement. The story is one of the basic intellectual means through which we make sense of the world and organize events and facts.

The purposes and uses of storytelling in the classroom include:

1. **Curriculum enhancement:** Almost any area of the curriculum can be enhanced by the addition and use of storytelling as a form of presentation. Obviously literature and the social studies courses seem to be natural areas for the incorporation of storytelling as a teaching technique. Yet, less obvious areas, such as science and mathematics can benefit from the telling of tales regarding beliefs, discoveries, and even related mythology.

   For example, the myths which complement the names of the planets and stars of our universe can entertain and inform the class. Anthropology and sociology courses can be enriched by tales from the folklore of diverse cultures. Philosophy and religion are natural areas for the presentation of mythological tales.

   Almost any course and instructor can employ what R. R. Ross, in *The Storyteller*, calls "the Experience Story"... "those remembrances that caught and stirred our emotion at the time of their happening, and imprinted themselves on our memories." These anecdotal stories can be tailored for any subject area,

but like more traditional stories, require more than mere memory. Careful preparation will ensure that the relating of experiences is more than an amusing digression.

2. **Improvement of listening skills:** Farnsworth states that "Listening, a normal and necessary human function, is nearly a forgotten art. No wonder that listening skills are now being taught in business, in universities, and in human relations. Storytelling encourages and develops concentration and good listening habits in a pleasurable and effective way."
3. **Language development:** Listening to stories also introduces more varied language patterns and can work to extend vocabulary, even among college students whose experience with language has been limited in our "post-literate" age.
4. **Creative expression:** Listening to stories gives practice in visualization and leads to further development of the creative imagination.

The time involved in the selection and preparation of stories for telling can be considerable, but the investment of time yields rewards and enjoyment in both the learning and presentation phases.

1. The story must have meaning for the storyteller, and the teller must be comfortable with and enjoy the story himself/herself. The selection and telling of a story ultimately reveals aspects of one's self. The teller's life experiences will influence the interpretation of a tale, and the teller should look for stories with which he/she can identify in terms of content, character, emotion, and style.
2. The story must be appropriate for the audience.
3. These criteria are inherent in the story itself: a) well-developed plot; b) clearly defined theme; c) style, especially use of language; e.g., vivid vocabulary and rhythmic and pleasurable combination of sounds; d) characterization; e) dramatic appeal; f) faithfulness to source material or best translation.
4. Storytelling within the classroom requires that the tale go beyond entertainment. The stories selected must, therefore, meet the instructor's goals and objectives for a particular unit and be accompanied by follow-up activities where appropriate. Sometimes the purpose of the telling may be to fill in gaps in the student's background or to provide information in a manner that delights and instructs.

In the visual approach, the teller learns the story as a sequence of pictures or as frames in a storyboard. In the auditory approach, the teller retains the sounds and rhythms of the story's language. Both approaches share some basics:

1. Read the story several times, both silently and then aloud, to acquire a feeling for it. As it is read aloud, listen to the sounds and rhythms. After reading, stop and recall the images which comprise the outline of the story.
2. Tell the story without the aid of the book. Be sure the proper sequence of events is learned.
3. Practice the story's style. Learn and use the interesting and repetitive phrases or words that add to the flavor of the story.
4. Practice timing to ensure dramatic impact. Use effective pauses to heighten suspense. Emphasize important words. Remember that this is storytelling, not acting. The teller does not have to use different voices or be overly dramatic.
5. Be aware of tone of voice. Use breath control to add variety and strength to tonal patterns.
6. Practice gestures. Eliminate any distracting movements or mannerisms. Use gestures which feel comfortable and are suitable to the story.
7. Prepare an introduction to the story that places it within the context of the course and the audience's experience.
8. Practice in front of a mirror or with a tape recorder or video recorder. This allows the teller to see and hear the process and may indicate areas which need refinement.

The delivery of the story should be as natural as possible. The teller should strive to maintain an inviting, relaxed, and intimate environment. This can be aided by establishing eye contact with the audience. The teller should establish a sense of personal warmth with a smile and pleasant facial expression.

Editing: *The storyteller should feel free to edit the story while in the process of telling. Unnecessary material may be cut and certain scenes and characters may be elaborated upon or eliminated as the occasion demands. One of the characteristics of the oral tradition is the wealth of story variations produced by such editing over the centuries.*

Physical setting: *The best environment for storytelling is free of distractions such as doors, bulletin boards, or windows. The teller should be the center of attention.*

Evaluation: *Depending upon the purpose of the telling, follow-up activities such as discussion, art projects, dramatic interpretation, or writing experiences may be appropriate. But often the concentration needed to <u>really</u> <u>listen</u> to the story is a learning experience in itself.*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Improving Classroom Communication

The teacher's life, however fulfilled, however stimulating, has days R. J. Yeatman must have been thinking about when he wrote, "For every person wanting to teach, there are at least 30 not wishing to be taught." Students sometimes fall asleep in class, read the campus newspaper instead of the lecture outline, talk when they should be quiet, refuse to speak up when they should, and respond to the instructor's most profound ideas with, "Is this going to be on the test?"

When the worst of times invade the best of times, or when the mysterious slump pervades days or weeks of classroom interaction, we tend to oversimplify causes. It's either our fault or it's the students' fault; and if everyone would only try harder, things would be perfect. In our more lucid moments, we acknowledge the complex of factors which may be operating in concert to sabotage course objectives, realizing that a bad day might be the consequence of a particularly difficult course topic, the aftermath of a treacherous exam, the morning after spring break, rampant flu virus, or the malfunctioning air conditioning. Still, the evaluation of our teaching effectiveness often proceeds in a more or less random fashion with little in the way of systematic examination on making weak classroom communication better or successful interaction even more effective.

Elements of Proof

One way of scrutinizing communication effectiveness is to think of classroom presentation as a collection of "proofs." Each of us has available three types of proof to use in persuading students to understand, accept, and/or act on the ideas we present. This three-part conception of the speaker's potential means of persuasion was detailed in Aristotle's The Art of Rhetoric and remains applicable these many centuries later. Perhaps its greatest merit lies in acknowledging the sometimes undervalued role played by the second and third elements of proof.

Logos, the first type of proof, consists of logical reasoning backed up by factual/expert opinion evidence. When we think of the substance of a lecture or discussion topic, we are most likely thinking of logos. A logical unit of proof contains three elements: something claimed or asserted, something to back up this claim, and something in the middle to provide the inferential link between the claim and the evidence—i.e., the reasoning. Although there are cases in which the reasoning may be self-evident and not explicitly stated, the evidence should be presented along with the claim. Otherwise, of course, what we have is just an assertion or what someone once called "a vagrant opinion with no visible means of support."

This is an area to consider carefully, if only because of the complacency we develop over time about our subject matter. When a course concept has been covered again and again over a span of many years, the temptation to regard it as common knowledge grows. It is so firmly embedded in our own academic repertoire that we lose sight of the student for whom the idea is brand new and may be received as something fresh and exciting or something vague and unsubstantiated.

Pathos, or "emotional" proofs, form the second element of proof. Emotion seems more traditionally viewed as an irrelevance, even an impediment to instruction, rather than the benefit it actually is. Some of us do a disservice to ourselves and our students by submerging emotion so effectively in the name of scholarship and dignity that we imbue our subjects with sterility. We are too afraid to laugh, to show unhappiness, to exult in the frequently exciting aspects of our work—to have fun in the classroom. "Star Trek's" Mr. Spock, with his calculating Vulcan side tempered by his more vulnerable earthling side, is an instructive example of the power of emotion as well as logic in compelling interest and acceptance.

Ethos is the third element of proof. The credibility of the speaker held in the minds of the listeners is the most powerful of the three types of proof we use to advance our ideas. It is, ironically, the least credited of the three in terms of its power to attract or repel student interests. No matter how brilliantly a class session may be structured and no matter how much the instructor chews on the scenery while presenting it, if the person expressing the ideas is regarded as incompetent, untrustworthy, and insincere, the message will not get

through. Emerson's often-quoted line expresses the idea succinctly: "What you are speaks so loudly, I cannot hear what you are saying."

The three most significant dimensions of **ethos** are these:

Competence—The speaker who is perceived as poorly prepared, unable to explain the material clearly, and deficient in the necessary knowledge will cause listeners to turn away from the ideas presented.

Trustworthiness—Listeners must sense a well-meaning attitude toward them. The speaker must be seen as honest, sincere, and concerned about the welfare of the listeners.

Dynamism—Research conducted in speaker credibility suggests that modern-day audiences are more influenced by the speaker's energy level than by the other two ethical ingredients. While I would be hesitant to recommend that anyone cultivate an artificially frenetic classroom style, any instructor with an extremely low-key style of speaking is working twice as hard to get the information to its destination than the one who will do a little tap dancing.

Ideas for Improving Classroom Speaking Style

- Speak loudly, clearly, and at a rate that is comfortable to you and manageable for the students.
- If you use a lectern, avoid welding yourself to it. The speaker's stand should be used as an aid for holding class notes, not as a Barcalounger.
- Keep your eyes on the students. Watch for nonverbal, as well as verbal, feedback. Do they look perplexed, hostile, sleepy? Are they taking notes? Are they alert and interested?
- Never read lectures. It is agonizing for listeners.
- Speak from an outline rather than a manuscript.
- Use supplements (charts, graphs, drawings, models) when they might help you explain something.
- Encourage a friendly, open atmosphere where students will not be afraid to ask questions. Draw out the quiet ones without intimidating them. Try to monitor understanding. Rather than saying, "Everybody got that?" (to which everyone will nod obediently), ask a student to rephrase the idea, give an example, or raise a challenge.
- Move around while you are working in the classroom. Listeners are better able to maintain attention to aural stimulation if they are receiving simultaneous visual stimulation. Moving close to students who are providing some sort of distraction in class will usually restore their attention.
- Look at yourself honestly and try to identify and correct distracting mannerisms. If facilities are available, have one of your class sessions videotaped and scrutinize the tape carefully, if possible, with a colleague whose judgment you respect. Do you: Fill pauses with "uhs" and "uhms?" Play with pencils, paper clips, rubber bands, and whatever else you find lying around in the classroom? Scratch your head? Play with your moustache? Twirl strands of hair? Repeat certain words or phrases so often that they become hallmarks of your style?
- Present yourself energetically and with all the confidence you deserve. All audiences—student or not—will generally invest about as much confidence in the speaker as the speaker seems to demand.
- Allow disagreement without being defensive. Students who are asking challenging questions are listening and thinking.
- Try not to let personal problems unduly influence the conduct of your class. Although students understand that we are human, too much intrusion from a negative mood dampens the overall atmosphere. The instructor's power to set the tone for everyone in the room is immense. To a large extent, playing the role of good cheer even when your outlook on the world is momentarily bleak, holds the personal distraction at bay. The act becomes, for as long as it is necessary, the reality.
- Enter your classroom with optimism and good will toward your students. Treat them with respect rather than patronizing them.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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Wilderness Classroom: A New Resource for Staff Development

Espiritu Santa, an uninhabited island in the Sea of Cortez, graced with numerous sandy beaches and warm, clear water, was the site of a unique Palomar College staff development program. Away from the stresses of everyday living, a small group of educators participated in a nine-day program which combined camping in the wilderness, kayaking along the shoreline of the island, and team-building workshops. The program was designed to assist educators in identifying principles of effective team-building and to "test out" their learnings in a real life situation. That goal was attained by challenging the group to spend a week living together on a desert island where team-building skills were crucial.

In the wilderness, participants met in a different environment and began relating to each other outside of established roles. The intensive daily interaction facilitated supportive and open communication within the group. Interpersonal barriers were lowered, and individuals let their truer selves emerge. As the week progressed, interactions became more genuine and spontaneous. The group had formed a bond and developed a cooperative attitude.

A series of workshops were offered to enhance the team-building skills. On the island, workshops were held in "wilderness classrooms": a rock quarry nestled in a grove of fig trees, a protected cove facing the emerald sea, and around the evening campfire. The 20 hours of workshops focused on important ingredients that make groups work, such as: "Understanding Behavioral Styles and Personality Types," "Effective Communication," "Leadership and Problem Solving," "Goal Setting," and "The Creativity Process."

Experiential exercises were utilized throughout the program. Working in dyads, one person in each pair was blindfolded; and the group took a "trust walk," negotiating difficult terrain. The experience stimulated a discussion of establishing trust and introduced a series of communication exercises. Participants remarked, "I learned the importance of being specific and descriptive in directing others," and "I learned how vulnerable I feel trusting another person with my safety."

Other experiential activities involved art materials, initiative tasks, visualization exercises, journal writing, and group presentations. The learning gained from these activities was applied to responsibilities and relationships in the workplace.

One challenge the group faced was passing the "dunk test," a drill where two people sitting in a kayak intentionally capsized the boat and practiced working together to escape. The drill was used to prevent panic in case a boat really did capsize at sea. This was put to a test one day when two- to four-foot swells and stiff headwinds made paddling difficult. Despite the fear experienced as kayaks rocked sideways and one boat snapped a rudder cable, the group effectively dealt with the situation and returned safely to shore.

Regarding their learnings, participants wrote:

"This was an excellent program to help individuals learn more about themselves. As the week progressed, team feedback and sharing developed a solid level of trust and an understanding of group dynamics."

"I was really forced to concentrate and had to effectively communicate."

"The presentation of behavioral styles and personality types was the most worthwhile activity in regards to improving teacher-student and personnel relationships."

"The right brain activities were beneficial...I usually do not seek them out...they were effective for investigation, creativity, and reflection."

"I have discovered a new approach toward accomplishing my work."

Outdoor experience was not required for participation in this program. The only prerequisite was an adventurous attitude.

Maria Miller, *Counselor*
Judy Eberhart, *Counselor*

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Adding Life to Employee Orientation

Orientation sessions always seemed so lifeless and boring when we gathered all new employees and had various administrators and department representatives "talk at them" about the college's programs and operations. In an effort to add some life to the process, Kirkwood Community College developed a most successful format for new employee orientation.

Orientation: Part I

KCC holds two separate orientation sessions: one session for new faculty and one for new support staff (including administrators). Each session begins with the president's address—an informal discussion about the history of Kirkwood, the mission and philosophy of the community college, and many of the programs and activities currently under way. Because the president is not actively involved in many of the hiring activities, this format provides an opportunity for him to meet new employees and to market Kirkwood. The fact that this activity has priority status with the president speaks for itself; the value of this time and attention is immeasurable. The informal climate created by the president, as well as the enthusiasm and energy he generates, make new employees feel instantly welcome, comfortable, and glad to be at Kirkwood.

Also at the session, current staff employees (two support staff personnel and two faculty members, for their respective groups) address the new employees and share their personal experiences and feelings about Kirkwood. These speakers are encouraged to discuss not only the positive and beneficial aspects of their experiences but also some of their frustrations. These sessions have proven to be particularly useful in establishing an identity for Kirkwood with our new employees and helping them "picture" themselves here.

Orientation: Part II

The second part of the program involves the participants in a self-selection process. Tables and booths are arranged conveniently in a large, open room; they are staffed by various department representatives, offering written information describing a wide variety of college services and procedures. Payroll, personnel, affirmative action, media services, library services, counseling services, wellness programs, insurance programs, staff development activities, employee unions, bookstore services, and graphics/printing services are examples of the information available at this "fair."

Participants are free to choose program/service areas in which they have interest and to move at their own pace, according to their own priorities. This activity provides them with an opportunity to meet one-on-one with department representatives, ask questions, begin to develop a familiarity and ease with other personnel on campus, and share their "new" status with each other. Refreshments are served throughout this portion of the program; the climate is social, active, and participatory.

Evaluation

The response to this format has been very positive from both new and experienced employees. Feedback from new employees is that they leave the orientation feeling good about their decision to be at Kirkwood and excited about their future here. Experienced employees tell us they learn something new at every session and feel a resurgence of enthusiasm for what Kirkwood is all about.

Summary

We believe that it is important to orient new employees to Kirkwood—where we've come from, what we do, how we do it, where we're going—and train them in terms of service to the students and the community. We believe that if we can instill the "sense of Kirkwood" in new employees, we will gain not only functionally-qualified personnel but also employees who will *feel* the essence of Kirkwood and will begin to develop loyalty and dedication at an early stage of the employment experience.

Lois M. Sawma, *Executive Director, Personnel*

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Good Teaching is Common Sense

"I take it for granted that every teacher should be interested in teaching, that he should work hard at the job, and that he should have good common sense. If he does not have those qualities, nothing will make him a good teacher. If he does have them he will learn by educating himself."

While this view has been attacked by some as anti-intellectual, this dean at a Big Ten graduate school was right on target with the importance he placed on common sense.

K. Patricia Cross suggests that we generally want to cause learning, which she sees as a process composed mostly of common sense practices. Cross gives us three:

1. *Provide an active learning environment.*
   When students are actively involved in the learning task, they learn more than when they are passive recipients of instruction.
2. *Allow and even demand practice.*
   Students need to be actively and successfully involved in learning tasks that lead to desired outcomes.
3. *Set high but attainable goals.*
   Academic performance, believe it or not, usually rises to meet expectations.

Looking at these practices, you may be saying to yourself, "I do that," or "Maybe, I should do more of that!" In fact, Cross contends these relatively straightforward strategies are only rarely implemented in college classrooms. Our own common sense should tell us that we can be more effective by applying simple practices that are known to work.

Some Things That Seem to Work . . .

What follows are a few general approaches that embrace strategies I have found to be effective in the teaching process.

1. *An Assumption About Student Interest*
   I assume that students are motivated to be successful in my course. Furthermore, I assume there will always be topics of real interest, no matter how boring the general subject might seem. This positive attitude is sensed immediately by most students and makes them more receptive and participative.
2. *Structure and Tasks*
   Every teaching session has a definite structure. There is a logical sequence of tasks or objectives. The students know this and generally are comfortable with it. We may not always follow the sequence exactly, but there usually is a clear sense of accomplishment when the session ends. If for some reason we don't get through everything planned for the session, we carry it over. If time does not allow that, an alternative way of achieving that objective is found.
3. *Students Using My Personal Notes and Materials*
   I lend students my lecture notes (not copies), reference books, and other resource material. They are always returned. Most often this occurs with part-time students who are not in regular contact with other students. This is one of those no-cost support systems a teacher can easily put into place and which will help the student who is not strongly committed to the course to stay with it.
4. *Accessibility*
   It usually is not enough to be available to students only for scheduled course hours. Some students will want to see you in your office, so it is sensible to inform students of your availability. If necessary, give them your home phone number. Access is important to students, and these practices eliminate the old "I couldn't get in touch with you."

   Our clientele will change. To a large extent, it already has. Students have jobs, children, and other responsibilities that often make communication difficult. If we can provide some alternative ways of keeping in touch, let's do so.
5. *Handouts, Handouts, Handouts*
   In many situations where I could provide handouts to students, I don't. "Why?" you ask. "Is it not an easy way to share material?" Of course, it is; and sometimes it is a good and necessary practice. However, there are things on my agenda besides distributing the written word. If I do not distribute the material, it means I will have to find some other mode of transmission; therefore, I will have to

rethink it and be creative.

So let's say I decide to take a very conventional approach and deliver the material in lecture style, using the board and perhaps overheads. Now I am assured that many of the students will read or hear the material at least once. Hopefully, most will also have written, in note form, some or all of the material. The recording by hand of something seen or heard is thought to produce better retention than simply seeing it.

6. *Planning Carefully for Small Group Work*
Due to the nature of systems work, I often want students to work in small project groups. This can be a good simulation of what happens in the workplace, but it is necessary to provide a fairly rigid structure to make it a productive activity. I hold frequent, brief, scheduled meetings with each group; and I require all group members to attend every meeting. The time is used to check progress against a workplan and to discuss problems and future direction.

   If a "people" problem is obvious in the group, I schedule a special meeting to deal with that problem. Often, the group will have worked out a solution before the meeting actually takes place.

   Usually, I find I have to do very little. Groups perform responsibly. I suspect this is so because the assigned systems project is hard work and very time-consuming. In this case, group performance rises to meet expectations.

7. *Using Simple Devices Routinely*
By devices I mean methods of presenting material, ways to organize a teaching session, and processes for communicating with students. An example is the time-tested method (habit, really) of always briefly reviewing what was accomplished during the previous teaching session at the beginning of the present one. You might say, "Everyone does that!" And I would say to you that, based on feedback from students, it is a rarer practice than any of us would think. The value of this simple practice is that it ties sessions together, gets the student ready to move on, and helps the teacher focus more clearly on upcoming material.

   Let me add a note of caution by way of a little story that might be called "The Professor Who Reviewed Too Well." Some years ago, I was enrolled in a course that dealt with the political history of Australia. The professor had been a very active participant in Australian federal politics in the 1940s and 1950s and had an astounding depth of knowledge to share. He was a firm believer in starting each three-hour lecture with a review of the previous lecture's material. Unfortunately for us, this device completely took over, and it seemed sometimes the review was longer than the original presentation. As the end of the course drew near, some of us could "lip-sync" the first hour or two; after all, we had reviewed the material a dozen times!

   In addition, I must mention a practice—implemented by my college—that is based on common sense and that, in my opinion, improves the student's probability of success. This practice is designating the faculty member as class advisor. In this role the teacher is the student's chief contact for course and program information. However, the primary value to the student is in having a real live person to talk to. This is critically important to first-year students who are struggling to adjust to the often frustrating college environment and those other students who are having academic difficulties and personal problems. This important contact point connects the student with many other more specialized services provided by the college. While this role is not teaching per se, it is something best done by the teacher and is a common sense contribution to learning.

How You Know . . .

Use student feedback as a gauge to measure your effectiveness: not some formal evaluation tool, but informal feedback. For example:

1. As you are teaching a course, students start to give you unsolicited articles from periodicals that pertain to a topic discussed in class.
2. After you have given a truly mind-numbing final assignment, students put notes on their submissions indicating how much they enjoyed a particular part of the course, or even the entire experience!

Common sense should tell us that when these behaviours take place, *we must be doing some things right*. We may not know specifically what, nor does it matter really, because most likely we have evolved a style of teaching that employs the simple, effective practices with which we are satisfied and comfortable.

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Into Century Twenty-One: After Writing-Across-The-Curriculum, Then What?

Despite the increasing popularity of across-the-curriculum programs in reading, writing, speaking, and thinking, educators as well as leaders in business and industry seem generally agreed that there is still something of a national literacy crisis. While the educational community tends to see the crisis as a lack of communication skills necessary for academic success, the business community prefers to interpret the crisis as a lack of communication skills required to function successfully in the world of work. This crisis has, therefore, at least two dimensions: a "literary" or academic dimension, and a functional or real-world dimension. Most across-the-curriculum programs, it seems, focus upon the academic dimension.

Here in Tucson, the Community Communication Corps, sponsored by Pima Community College, attempts to reach beyond traditional across-the-curriculum programs in several respects. The Corps tries to address both dimensions of the crisis. The Corps also endeavors to tailor its activities to the specialized (as opposed to the generic) needs of students. Again, while most programs promote literacy as a campus-wide responsibility, the Corps believes that literacy, whether for academic or real-world success, must be accepted as a community responsibility because the literacy crisis has simply grown much too large for schools to remediate alone. We need outside help—now.

Essentially, the Corps is a partnership between business and education that promotes several communication skills across the disciplines, from middle schools through community college. The concept was borrowed in part from the Phoenix-based SWRL Project and is partly an outgrowth of a local, multi-school, writing- and speaking-across-the-curriculum program.

Central to Corps activities is Business Partners in Education (or BPEs), a resource that is creative, stimulating, and effective. BPEs, who receive release time from their place of employment, are not expected to have degrees in English, speech, or reading; they need only a reasonable facility in one or more of the communication skills being promoted: writing, speaking, reading, listening, and critical thinking. Having met this requirement, BPEs meet in workshops with teachers from courses across the curriculum and with language arts specialists to form T-Teams (teaching teams). These T-Teams develop communication units for classroom presentation. The kinds of units vary from role playing exercises to mock job interviews to written scenarios to oral summaries to impromptu debates.

The following example was a Corps activity prepared for a class in human development at Pima Community College. The class, called "Women in Progress," enrolls re-entry women—typically single parents or displaced homemakers planning to complete programs of study and/or obtain marketable job skills. In fact, many are in desperate need to find at least part-time work to remain in school.

In considering the needs of this group, T-Team members decided that a basic workshop in preparing a resumé, completing application forms, and interviewing would be appropriate. The BPE, who works for Pima County government, supplied job application forms along with a listing of current job openings. During the classroom activities, students were given information about employment opportunities, how to submit a good application and resumé, how to dress for that all-important job interview, and how to handle that interview. As part of the workshop, students were required to "dress up" as though actually applying for the position desired. The T-Team discussed the proper "uniform" for particular job interviews and then critiqued each student's attire. At an appropriate juncture, students were given a homework assignment which required them to prepare an application blank with an attached resumé. The T-Team provided an in-depth critique of each application and required students to re-submit corrected applications.

As a result of this exercise, some students actually obtained employment on a temporary basis. Even those who were less fortunate discovered that their application forms are often the only initial means by which a

prospective employer can form an image about them and make a possible hiring judgment. Because there is so much competition for jobs, these students realized how very important it is to learn to communicate through the writing medium.

Students were not the only beneficiaries for this activity. One important lesson learned by the volunteer teacher was the great need for students to learn basic "survival" skills. As the instructor noted in her report to the Corps, "Many students are seriously lacking in fundamental knowledge about how to even start a successful job-hunting plan. In one of my classes of 24 students, only three turned in applications that the BPE and I considered to be neat and complete enough for a prospective employer to even contemplate employing them. The students themselves were surprised at the number of errors in their applications and then grateful that we had done such an in-depth critique. As one student put it, 'I can understand now why I've had such a hard time even getting called in for an interview.'"

Like the team whose unit was just described, most Corps T-Teams attempt to tailor classroom units to the needs of their students. Most also demonstrate the relationship between communication proficiency and problem solving. Further, most teams try to develop communication skills activities which have discernible relevance to course content and which are grounded in the working world. The functional value of literacy is sometimes particularly enhanced in classes in which BPEs emphasize the real-world necessity of correct spelling and punctuation, effective organization of ideas, clarity, and polish.

What had impressed us about the SWRL project was its success in improving student attitudes about the real-world necessity for communication skills. Our experience in the Corps has been similarly gratifying. For Corps teachers, the old adage "Seeing is believing" is reflected in altered student attitudes—changes which teachers alone have been unable to inspire in years of futile classroom preachments. And we have discovered that when student attitudes about communication skills undergo favorable change, the change is translated into enhanced learning. In a sense, the real value of having the BPE in the classroom lies, not in teaching the teacher's class, but in reshaping student attitudes.

Project evaluations, based on 64 T-Teams working with approximately 1300 students, confirm the beneficial effects of the BPE in the classroom. Virtually every participating faculty and BPE gave enthusiastic approval to the experiment, and 84% of participating students deemed their Corps learning experience to be substantially worthwhile.

Whether the Corps will survive over the long run is an open question, of course. One thing, however, seems clear. Educators will have to do more than they are currently doing if our students are going to meet the twenty-first century with real-world communication skills. The Corps is our attempt to help students do just that.

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